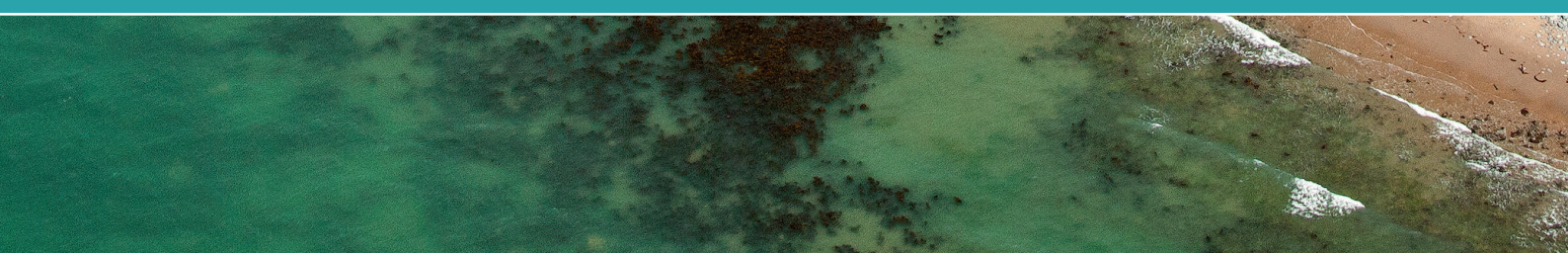
Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh National Marine Plan

November 2019



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Foreword by Lesley Griffiths AM

Our seas are an incredible natural asset and an intrinsic part of our history, economy and way of life. They support an abundance of diverse and vibrant species, habitats and ecosystems, contribute to our wellbeing, contribute millions to our economy, support thousands of jobs and offer a rich, distinctive heritage.

The Welsh National Marine Plan sets out for the first time our long term vision for the sustainable development of our seas. Its publication sends a clear message that we are planning for a more prosperous and resilient Wales; a Wales where natural resources are sustainably managed for the benefit of both current and future generations and where our seas and marine ecosystems are healthy and resilient, supporting a thriving, sustainable economy.

By publishing the first ever Welsh National Marine Plan, I am setting out an integrated, evidenced and plan-led approach to marine development that respects established uses and interests whilst securing benefits from new opportunities, recognising the importance of our heritage, ecosystem resilience, the value of biodiversity and the imperative to tackle climate change. Our aim is for the sustainable development of our seas to support jobs and social equity while ensuring our natural assets can continue to provide the resources and environmental benefits upon which our well-being relies.

Our seas have the potential to be at the forefront of moves to a low carbon economy, making a strong contribution to energy security and climate change emission targets through the responsible deployment of low carbon technologies. Wales' tourism, transport, marine energy, fisheries, aquaculture and telecommunications industries amongst others already play a vital role in our economy. For our coastal communities, the sea and its associated activities provide both employment and opportunities for recreational activities as well as supporting cultural and linguistic diversity and a sense of heritage. Our coastal environment has the potential to be among the most attractive in Europe for living, working and visiting.

The development of the Welsh National Marine Plan has been the result of genuine and extensive collaboration between Welsh Government and our marine stakeholders over the past five years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has fed into this process, enabling us to reach this significant milestone in our ambitions for the sustainable management of our seas.

I am pleased to present to you the first ever Welsh National Marine Plan.

Lesley Griffiths AM
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

Introduction

1. The Welsh marine area comprises diverse and valuable natural resources that underpin our well-being. Welsh Government is undertaking marine planning for the sustainable management of our seas, helping ensure they are healthy and resilient so current and future generations can benefit from them.

2. This Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP; referred to as "this Plan" throughout) is the first marine plan for Wales and represents the start of a process of shaping our seas to support economic, social, cultural and environmental objectives. Marine planning will guide the sustainable development of our marine area by setting out how proposals will be considered by decision makers.

3. This document is a marine plan for the inshore and offshore Welsh marine plan regions. It has been prepared and adopted under the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MCAA) 2009[1] for the purposes of Section 51 of the MCAA and in accordance with Schedule 6 of the MCAA and in conformity with the UK Marine Policy Statement (MPS)[2]. This Plan and supporting material should be used by **applicants** to shape proposals and licence applications, **public authorities** to guide decision making, and **other users** to understand Welsh Government's policy for the sustainable development of the Plan area.

Scope

Geographical scope

4. The Welsh marine plan area consists of around 32,000 km^2 of sea, with 2,120 km of coastline. This Plan covers both the Welsh inshore region (from mean high water spring tides out to 12 nautical miles) and offshore region (beyond 12 nautical miles)[3] in a single document (Figure 1). Unless otherwise stated, policies in this Plan apply to both regions. The Plan area is adjacent to two English marine planning regions, the North West and South West marine plan areas. The Plan also shares boundaries with Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and Republic of Ireland.

Functional scope

5. The management of activities in Welsh waters is split between devolved functions, the responsibility of Welsh Ministers, and functions retained by UK Government.

6. This Plan includes provision relating to devolved and retained functions and has been adopted with the agreement of the UK Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Duration and review

7. This Plan takes a 20-year view whilst recognising that certain activities may need to be planned for beyond this period and others are likely to change significantly during this Plan's lifetime.

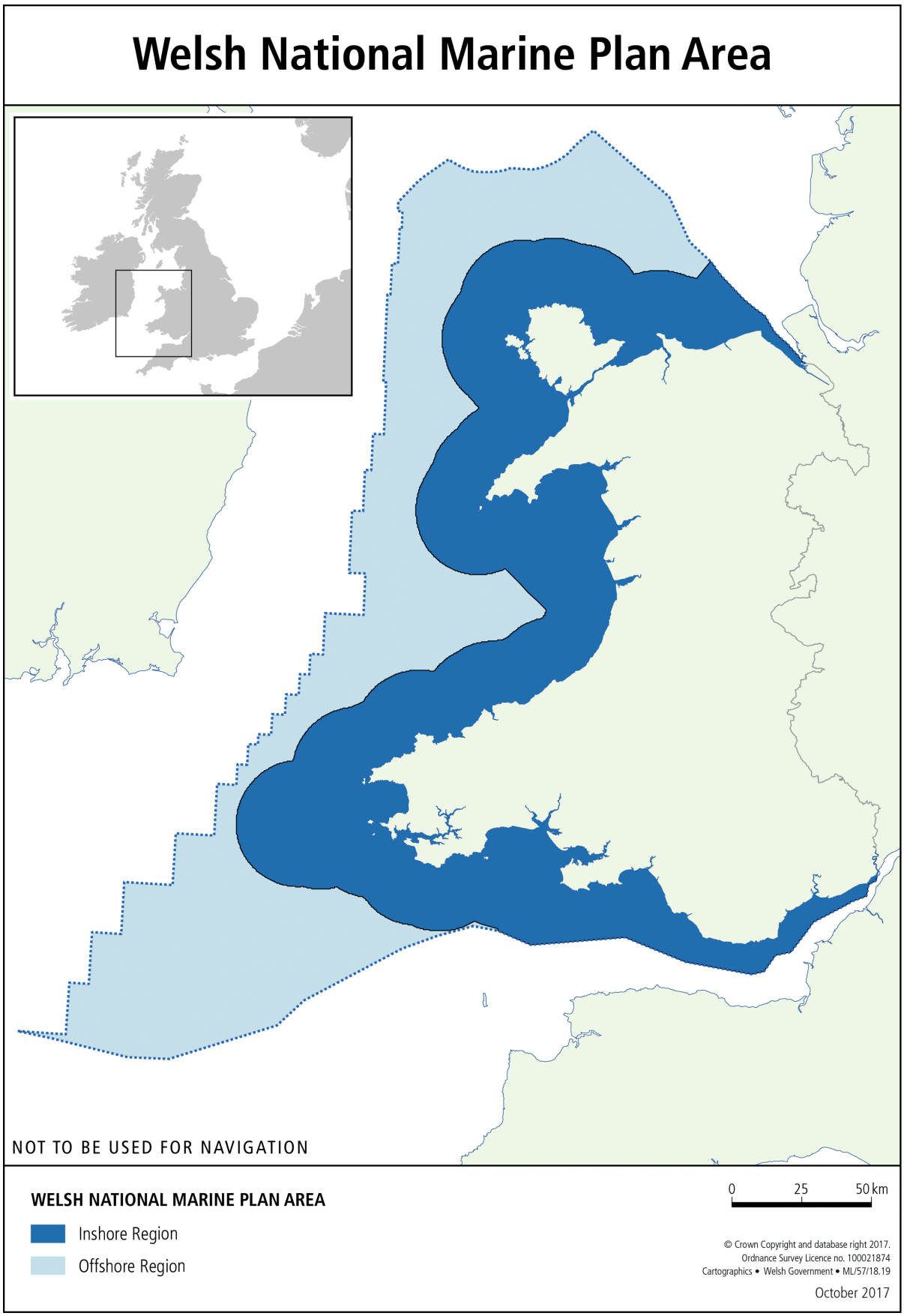
8. Monitoring and reporting is a statutory requirement (MCAA s.61) and an important step in the planning process. We will review and report at least every three years on the effects of policies in this Plan.

1 **www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/contents**.

2 **www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69322/pb3654-marine-policy-statement-110316.pdf**.

3 s.322(2)MCAA.

Figure 1: Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP) area



Vision and objectives

9. Our **vision** for the Welsh inshore and offshore marine plan regions is:

> Welsh seas are clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse:
>
> - Through an ecosystem approach, natural resources are sustainably managed and our seas are healthy and resilient, supporting a sustainable and thriving economy;
> - Through access to, understanding of and enjoyment of the marine environment and maritime cultural heritage, health and well-being are improving;
> - Through Blue Growth more jobs and wealth are being created and are helping coastal communities become more resilient, prosperous and equitable with a vibrant culture; and
> - Through the responsible deployment of low carbon technologies, the Welsh marine area is making a strong contribution to energy security and climate change emissions targets.

10. The vision supports the shared UK vision of **clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse** oceans and seas and Welsh Government's commitments to supporting the Well-being of current and future generations[4].

11. Our vision will be achieved through an integrated, evidenced and plan-led approach that respects established uses and interests whilst securing benefits from new opportunities, recognising the importance of our heritage, ecosystem resilience, the value of biodiversity and imperative to tackle climate change.

12. The Plan vision will be delivered through the Plan's objectives (Table 1) supported by general, cross-cutting policies and sector-specific objectives and policies. Plan objectives describe the desired outcomes this Plan is seeking to achieve, thereby supporting the UK High Level Marine Objectives (HLMOs)[5] and the MPS.

4 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 **www.legislation.gov.uk/cy/anaw/2015/2/contents/enacted**.

5 MPS Chapter 2, Box 1.

Table 1. Plan objectives

HLMO theme	Objective	
Overarching	1	Support the sustainable development of the Welsh marine area by contributing across Wales' well-being goals, supporting the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) through decision making and by taking account of the cumulative effects of all uses of the marine environment.
Achieving a sustainable marine economy	2	Contribute to a thriving Welsh economy by encouraging economically productive activities and profitable and sustainable businesses that create long term employment at all skill levels.
	3	Support the opportunity to sustainably develop marine renewable energy resources with the right development in the right place, helping to achieve the UK's energy security and carbon reduction objectives, whilst fully considering other's interests, and ecosystem resilience.
	4	Provide space to support existing and future economic activity through managing multiple uses, encouraging the coexistence of compatible activities, the mitigation of conflicts between users and, where possible, by reducing the displacement of existing activities.
	5	Recognise the significant value of coastal tourism and recreation to the Welsh economy and well-being and ensure such activity and potential for future growth are appropriately safeguarded.
Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society	6	Contribute to supporting the development of vibrant, more equitable, culturally and linguistically distinct, cohesive and resilient coastal communities.
	7	Support enjoyment and stewardship of our coasts and seas and their resources by encouraging equitable and safe access to a resilient marine environment, whilst protecting and promoting valuable landscapes, seascapes and historic assets.
	8	Improve understanding and enable action supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation.
Living within environmental limits	9	Support the achievement and maintenance of Good Environmental Status (GES) and Good Ecological Status (GeS).
	10	Protect, conserve, restore and enhance marine biodiversity to halt and reverse its decline including supporting the development and functioning of a well-managed and ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and resilient populations of representative, rare and vulnerable species.
	11	Maintain and enhance the resilience of marine ecosystems and the benefits they provide in order to meet the needs of present and future generations.
Promoting good governance	12	Support proportionate, consistent and integrated decision making through implementing forward-looking policies as part of a plan-led, precautionary, risk-based and adaptive approach to managing Welsh seas.
Using sound science responsibly	13	Develop a shared, accessible marine evidence base to support use of sound evidence and provide a mechanism for the unique characteristics and opportunities of the Welsh Marine Area to be better understood.

Policy context

13. This Plan, as one of a suite of UK marine plans, will contribute to the sustainable development of the UK marine area and support delivery of our shared UK vision. Marine planning for Wales operates within the UK framework but has a distinct Welsh focus reflecting devolved legislative context, responsibilities and commitments.

14. Whilst marine planning will make an important contribution to delivering our vision, it is part of a wider picture. There are a wide range of other policy and regulatory requirements in place and this Plan has been developed as part of this context (see Annex 1) and signposts to them as appropriate.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

15. This Plan forms part of the relevant policy framework that will guide public authority decision making. Any Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) located in Wales could present substantial opportunities to transform local communities, their economy and the environment. This Plan will be a consideration in any determination of a relevant NSIP alongside any relevant National Policy Statement (NPS) or other relevant considerations.

16. Welsh Ministers expect NSIP developments located wholly or partly in the Plan area (or relying on natural resources located wholly or partly in Wales) to contribute to the well-being of Welsh communities and the sustainable management of natural resources. NSIP proposals are encouraged to avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse impacts commonly associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of major infrastructure projects. Also they should seek to deliver lasting legacy benefits for the local community, the economy and the environment, including through:

- Supporting the sustainability, vibrancy and quality of life of coastal communities;
- Conserving and enhancing the cultural heritage of Wales' coastal communities and promoting the Welsh language;
- Providing infrastructure, housing, facilities and services necessary to support development which is accessible to host communities and offers a legacy use;
- Contributing to long term sustainable economic development and local prosperity by creating high quality, local employment opportunities, taking into account the likely requirements for training, and working with national and government training organisations;
- Delivering necessary transport infrastructure and promoting sustainable modes of transport that provide enduring low carbon connectivity and a legacy benefit;
- Contributing to the transition towards the achievement of low carbon, sustainable economic development, minimising carbon emissions and increasing the resilience of people, places and the environment to the effects of climate change; and
- Contributing to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, as defined in the Environment Act (Wales) 2016[6].

How to use this Plan

17. This Plan (as well as the MPS) are 'appropriate marine policy documents' for the purpose of the MCAA.

Who should use this Plan

18. The MCAA requires a public authority (MCAA[7] s.322(1)) to take any authorisation or enforcement decision in accordance with the appropriate marine policy documents (this Plan,

6 www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/contents/enacted.
7 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/section/322.

other UK marine plans if relevant and the MPS) unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise. An authorisation or enforcement decision (MCAA s.58(4)) is the determination of any application for authorisation[8]; any decision relating to the conditions of such an authorisation or to the extension, replacement, variation, revocation or withdrawal of the authorisation or any conditions placed upon the authorisation; as well as any decision relating to the enforcement of such conditions or of any prohibition or restrictions. The MCAA also requires public authorities to have regard to the appropriate marine policy documents in making any decision which relates to the exercise of any function capable of affecting the whole or any part of the UK marine area which is not an authorisation or enforcement decision.

19. This Plan provides policy direction and support for decisions with the potential to affect the Plan area and should be used by both applicants and relevant public authorities (who have a decision-making role) in development of proposals and consideration for authorisation. It should also be used by relevant public authorities in making non-authorisation or enforcement decisions which have the potential to affect the Plan area. In compliance with the provisions of MCAA s.59(4), it is an appropriate marine policy document in relation to the exercise by public authorities of functions retained by UK Government and has been adopted with the agreement of the UK Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

20. Any decision with the potential to affect the Plan area, including those related to terrestrial activities, should be taken in accordance with this Plan unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise or with regard to this Plan (in line with the provisions of paragraph 18 above). If the decision has the potential to also affect another marine plan area then it should be taken in accordance with, or with regard to, other relevant marine plan(s), as applicable.

21. Action is required by a range of parties to ensure the effective implementation of this Plan, including developers, public authorities and other users. Key roles and responsibilities include:

The Welsh Ministers (the marine plan authority)

22. The Welsh Ministers are responsible for setting policy and preparing marine plans in Wales. In doing so they:

- produce, keep under review and amend marine plans, setting out Welsh Government policy for sustainable development;
- oversee and support marine plan implementation;
- monitor and report on the effectiveness of marine planning;
- contribute to cross-border co-operation between planning authorities and processes (terrestrial and marine);
- keep relevant matters under review;
- take account of evidence presented through the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)[9] and other evidence and use this to guide planning policy; and
- have regard to this Plan and the MPS in developing policy, providing guidance or making decisions which may affect the Plan area.

Developers

23. Developers are responsible for ensuring their proposals are in accordance with this Plan. In doing so they should, in a proportionate manner:

- engage early across and between relevant stakeholders;
- consider this Plan early in project development;
- apply the policies in this Plan to help shape proposals;
- consider sectoral marine planning and other plans in developing proposals;

8 MCAA s.58(6) defines an authorisation as "any approval, confirmation, consent, licence, permission or other authorisation (however described), whether special or general".

9 **www.naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/the-state-of-natural-resources-report-assessment-of-the-sustainable-management-of-natural-resources/?lang=en**.

- supply information required for the relevant public authorities to assess their proposal(s), including fit with Plan policy;
- ensure evidence provided is sound and proportionate; and
- help address evidence gaps by gathering and sharing relevant evidence where appropriate.

Public authorities

24. Relevant public authorities are responsible for assessing whether proposals are in accordance with this Plan in making planning, policy, and authorisation and enforcement decisions. In doing so they should:

- contribute to sustainable development by applying Plan policies thereby integrating environmental, cultural, social and economic objectives;
- encourage early engagement across and between stakeholders;
- make authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with this Plan and the MPS unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise (and state reasons if any decision is not in accordance with the appropriate marine policy documents);
- have regard to this Plan and to the MPS in making any decision which may affect the whole or any part of the Plan area (other than an authorisation or enforcement decision);
- look favourably on proposals that contribute to this Plan's vision and objectives and comply with Plan policies;
- safeguard established interests and resources of importance to sectors in accordance with this Plan; and
- make available relevant evidence and guidance, where appropriate, to support plan implementation.

How to apply this Plan

25. This Plan contains general cross-cutting and sector-specific policies. **Sector-specific policies** operate alongside general policies and relate to particular activities. Both the **General Policies** and the Sector Policies should be applied, unless associated policy narrative or supplementary planning documents (as detailed in paragraphs 33 and 62) indicate otherwise.

26. This Plan provides an integrated set of objectives and policies for the sustainable development of the Plan area and, as such, **none of the objectives, policies or supporting text should be considered or applied in isolation**.

27. All proposals, authorisation decisions and enforcement decisions should apply the policies in this Plan to project design, proposal application and related decision making. The only exceptions are if the associated Plan policy narrative or supplementary planning documents (as detailed in paragraphs 33 and 62) state policy is not applicable, or relevant considerations indicate otherwise. Policy in this Plan guides proposals and decision making (alongside other relevant considerations); it does not negate the need for authorisation under relevant regulatory regimes.

28. When an application for use of the marine area that requires authorisation is made to a public authority, the proposal should reflect the relevant policies in this Plan and the policy fit should be clearly set out. Appropriate evidence addressing policy fit and compliance should be provided to support decision making.

29. If to any extent a policy stated in this Plan conflicts with any other statement or information in the Plan, that conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy. Where there is the potential for conflicts to arise between Plan policies, decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis to best support the delivery of the objectives of this Plan.

Table 2: Overview of the process for developing and authorising proposals of relevance to this Plan.

Activity	Who	Key consideration(s)
Understanding the context for a proposal potentially requiring authorisation	Developer	Consider the relevant **policy framework** – this Plan, the MPS, relevant terrestrial development planning plans such as the National Development Framework (NDF), Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) and Local Development Plans (LDPs), relevant NPSs and neighbouring marine plans. Consider the relevant **regulatory regime** – marine licensing (Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED) etc.), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), terrestrial development planning, developments of national significance (DNS), NSIP (and relevant NPSs). Consider spatial **opportunities** and potential constraints – this Plan's general policies, supporting and safeguarding sector policies and policy implementation guidance, marine planning portal (natural resources, sea users, current authorisations) and relevant sectoral planning – plus other relevant considerations.
If the project requires authorisation from a public authority and has the potential to affect the Plan area then relevant authorisation decisions will be taken in accordance with this Plan.		
Develop and refine the proposal – pre-application	Developer	Where appropriate, engage with the relevant public authority, as well as adjacent public authorities, to discuss the scale and nature of the proposal and the **proportionate implementation of this Plan's policies** – relevant public authorities and Welsh Government marine planning officials. Assess **existing evidence**, identify key issues and further evidence needs, collect and apply evidence – marine planning portal (natural resources, sea users, current authorisations), other evidence sources, supplementary planning guidance where available. Where appropriate, engage with **other sea users** to understand and manage opportunities and potential conflicts. Consider relevant advice and guidance produced by public authorities and/or industry bodies. Gather any outstanding evidence including, if necessary, desk or site study.
Provide public authority with proposal and supporting evidence	Developer	Submit application providing clear evidence for **policy compliance** (based upon best available evidence). Describe any residual policy conflicts, including any conflicting sector interactions and justifications.

Activity	Who	Key consideration(s)
Assess proposal	Public authority	Consider how proposal **complies with this Plan's policies**. Consider the relevant **regulatory regime** or statutory requirement, e.g. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003, Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2004, Environmental (Wales) Act 2016 (s. 6 & 7)[9], Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act[10] (WFGA) 2015. Incorporate other **relevant considerations** – new/other evidence, planning policy updates, sectoral planning. Determine **licence conditions** in accordance with the MPS and relevant marine plan policies and other relevant considerations.
Make determination	Public authority	**Make determination** in accordance with this Plan unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise and if this is the case set out why.
Post authorisation	Developer and Public Authority	**Comply with any authorisation conditions, including undertaking any necessary monitoring and report findings. Make evidence available to inform future policy development and developments.**

Proportionate application of this Plan and its policies

30. The level of detail required to demonstrate compliance should be proportionate to a project's scale, potential impacts and risk (in accordance with **Policy GEN_02**).

31. Similarly, the level of assessment and engagement undertaken for any project should be proportionate to the scale and potential impact of the project and in accordance with any relevant project assessment requirements.

32. For practical purposes, relevant authorities may consider it appropriate that proposals be categorised into "bands" to guide understanding of the level of detail likely to be required in proposal design and decision making.

10 **www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/contents/enacted.**
11 **www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents/enacted.**

Categorisation of proposal types to support understanding of the practical application of this Plan's policies, for example (in relation to marine licensing):

- **Band One** activities are low risk and little or no additional evidence is likely to be required to demonstrate compliance with this Plan.
- **Band Two** activities are medium risk. Some evidence is likely to be required to demonstrate compliance with this Plan. The level of evidence required will be based upon the level of risk associated with the project.
- **Band Three** activities are higher risk, including projects that require formal project assessment processes. A greater level of evidence is likely to be required to demonstrate compliance with this Plan.

Proposals falling into Bands Two and Three should include a clear supporting statement on which plan policies are relevant, the extent to which the proposal complies with the policies and how the proposal contributes to the Plan vision and objectives.

Overview of this Plan's policies and how to interpret them

33. Each Plan policy has a code. For example, **GEN_01** = General cross-cutting policy number 01. Unless otherwise stated, policies apply to both the inshore and offshore marine planning regions. Policies are supported by policy context and, where appropriate, maps. These maps show relevant information including the distribution of activities and natural resources and, in some cases, indicate the spatial context of policies. Supplementary planning documents (e.g. Implementation Guidance (IG) and Marine Planning Notices (MPNs)) may provide further support and spatial guidance for policy implementation.

Sector policy chapters

34. This Plan's sector chapters provide policy for the future development and use of the marine plan area for certain sectors that use Welsh seas.

35. Each sector chapter sets out general policy, including specific, numbered Plan policies (e.g. **AQU_01**) that support the sector objective(s). Taken together with the general cross-cutting policies, sector policies contribute to delivery of this Plan's objectives and vision. They may apply to inshore and/or offshore areas of the Plan area and in some cases relate to **Strategic Resource Area(s)** (SRAs) to be identified in a MPN.

Sector objectives

36. Sector objectives articulate the desired future state for that sector and provide context for sector policies. Sector objectives may be achievable over the life of this Plan or may describe the longer-term direction for the sector. Each sector objective is aligned with one or more HLMO:

HLMO	
Achieving a sustainable marine economy	
Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society	
Living within environmental limits	
Promoting good governance	
Using sound science responsibly	

Sector policies

37. Sector policies include **supporting policy** (to support the sustainable development of a sector) and **safeguarding policy** (to protect certain sectors' interests from adverse impacts from other activities). Sector policies must be considered alongside all other Plan policies.

Sector Supporting Policy

38. Sector supporting policies provide a framework for sustainable development of the Welsh marine area, favouring proposals which do not unacceptably interfere with, or devalue, other legitimate users and uses of the Plan area, or result in unacceptable effects upon marine ecosystem resilience.

39. Supporting Policy largely follows a common framework, comprising:

- Support for proposals which contribute to the sustainable development of the sector where consistent with policies and objectives of this Plan; and
- Encouraging collaboration and strategic evidence collation in order to better understand future opportunities and potential for sustainable development.

Sector Safeguarding Policy

40. Safeguarding policy seeks to protect:

- consented activity e.g. aggregates, subsea cables or energy infrastructure;
- established (not consented activity) e.g. fisheries or tourism and recreation; and
- areas of future opportunity (which may be defined through SRAs).

Table 3: Mapping Plan objectives to plan policies

WNMP Objectives	
Achieving a sustainable marine economy	**Given effect by WNMP policies**
Contribute to a thriving Welsh economy by encouraging economically productive activities and profitable and sustainable businesses that create long term employment at all skill levels.	GEN_01 P&S_01 ECON_01 P&S_02 AGG_01 CAB_01 AQU_01 T&R_01 D&D_01 SAF_01 O&G_01 SAF_02 FIS_01
Support the opportunity to sustainably develop marine renewable energy resources with the right development in the right place, helping to achieve the UK's energy security and carbon reduction objectives, whilst fully considering other's interests, and ecosystem resilience.	GEN_01 ENV_01 GEN_02 ELC_01 ECON_01 SAF_01 ECON_02 SAF_02
Provide space to support existing and future economic activity through managing multiple uses, encouraging the coexistence of compatible activities, the mitigation of conflicts between users and, where possible, by reducing the displacement of existing activities.	GEN_01 SAF_01 ECON_02 SAF_02 GOV_01
Recognise the significant value of coastal tourism and recreation to the Welsh economy and well-being and ensure such activity and potential for future growth are appropriately safeguarded.	GEN_01 SOC_07 ECON_01 SOC_08 SOC_01 ENV_04 SOC_02 ENV_07 SOC_04 GOV_02 SOC_05 T&R_01 SOC_06 SAF_01

WNMP Objectives	
Ensuring a strong healthy and just society	**Given effect by WNMP policies**
Contribute to supporting the development of vibrant, more equitable, culturally and linguistically distinct, cohesive and resilient coastal communities.	GEN_01 SOC_08 ECON_01 SOC_09 SOC_02 SOC_11 SOC_04 GOV_02
Support enjoyment and stewardship of our coasts and seas and their resources by encouraging equitable and safe access to a resilient marine environment, whilst protecting and promoting valuable landscapes, seascapes and historic assets.	SOC_01 SOC_08 SOC_05 SOC_09 SOC_06 GOV_01 SOC_07 T&R_01
Improve understanding and enable action supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation.	SOC_08 SOC_10 SOC_09 SOC_11

WNMP Objectives	
Living within environmental limits	**Given effect by WNMP policies**
Support the achievement and maintenance of Good Environmental Status (GES) and Good Ecological Status (GeS).	SOC_01 SOC_06 SOC_09 SOC_10 ENV_01 ENV_02 ENV_03 ENV_04 ENV_05 ENV_06 ENV_07 GOV_01 FIS_01
Protect, conserve, restore and enhance marine biodiversity to halt and reverse its decline including supporting the development and functioning of a well-managed and ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and resilient populations of representative, rare and vulnerable species.	ENV_01 ENV_02 ENV_03 ENV_04 ENV_05 ENV_06 ENV_07
Maintain and enhance the resilience of marine ecosystems and the benefits they provide in order to meet the needs of present and future generations.	ENV_01 ENV_02 ENV_03 ENV_04 ENV_05 ENV_06 ENV_07

Maps

41. This Plan includes contextual maps relating to:

- natural resources;
- management measures;
- areas authorised for certain activity; and
- patterns of human use.

42. Some sector chapters include one or more maps to guide sector policies and/or for illustrative purposes.

43. Sector maps are indicative and their content liable to change. Decisions should be taken in line with best available evidence and relevant considerations; developers and decision makers should refer to current sector maps on the marine planning portal **http://lle.gov.wales/apps/marineportal/**.

Resource Areas (RAs)

44. In order to show the spatial distribution of natural resources that could support future sector activity, this Plan identifies Resource Areas (RAs) for some sectors. These are broad areas that describe the distribution of a particular resource that is or has the potential to be used (in terms of technical feasibility).

45. RAs have been identified by a process of evidence collection and interpretation. RAs will change as understanding improves, further evidence becomes available and/or sector technology develops. RAs are shown on the marine planning portal.

Strategic Resource Areas (SRAs)

46. The MPS requires marine plans to 'provide for greater coherence in policy and take a forward-looking, proactive and spatial planning approach to the management of the marine area, its resources, and the activities and interactions that take place within it'[12]. In order to understand future resource use opportunities and identify important resources upon which certain sectors may depend, this Plan allows for the introduction and refinement of SRAs.

47. SRAs are a tool to improve the management of marine activities, space and resources, helping to support the management of sector-sector interactions and providing a focus for further strategic planning.

48. SRAs, where introduced, will guide related sector safeguarding policy. SRAs do not necessarily confer development suitability nor do they sterilise an area from development by other activities. Unless specified, SRAs do not imply any particular scale or rate of development or resource use and certain human activity may not be appropriate in an SRA because of the requirement to protect MPA features. Areas safeguarded by an SRA may reflect the long term potential for a sector over the lifetime of this Plan or beyond.

49. Table 4 describes the role of SRAs in underpinning the sustainable development of natural resources.

12 MPS Chapter 1, Section 1.1.

Figure 2: Overview of Resource Areas

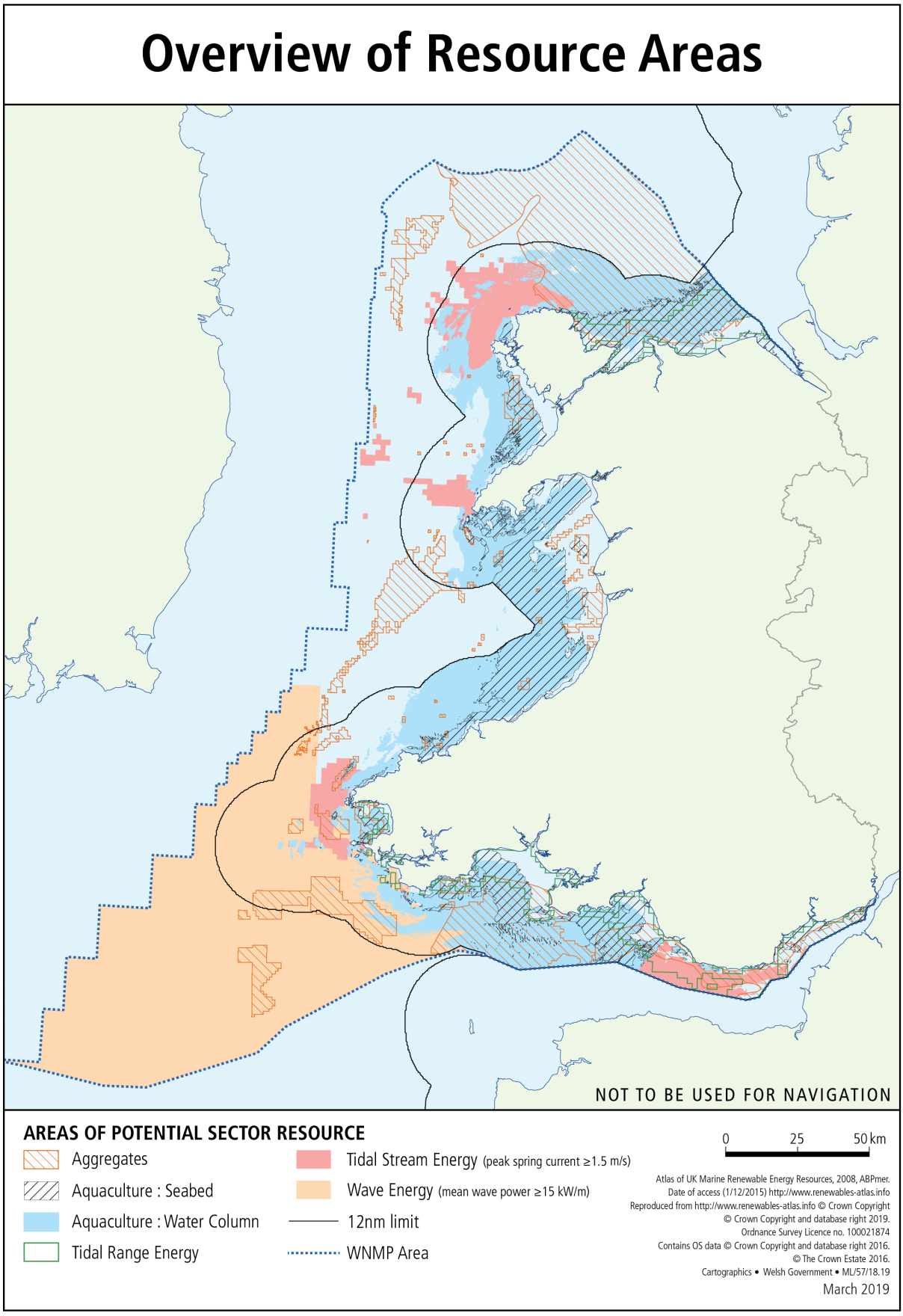


Table 4: SRAs for the sustainable development of natural resources

Societal benefit	Potential societal benefit accruing from the sustainable development of natural resources e.g.: • Food • Energy • Trade • Transport • Tourism • Recreation • Health • Well-being • Nature conservation
Resource distribution including technical constraints	SRAs provide safeguarding for potential future sustainable resource use in order to meet societal need and deliver societal benefit through: • mapping location of resources; and • applying filters to define the technical and operational feasibility of utilising resources.
Sectoral ambition, capability and direction	This Plan recognises industry ambition and capability are necessary for sustainable development and future use of natural resources. SRAs will support industry by: • recognising and safeguarding the location of important resources; and • enabling collaboration at a strategic/planning level to understand opportunities for sustainable development.
Resource use constraints (environmental, economic and societal)	Potential for sustainable development and use is dependent upon environmental, economic and societal considerations. This Plan recognises and maps legal requirements to **conserve** habitats, species and biodiversity and the related statutory obligations with which developers must comply. These requirements, together with Plan policies and SRA maps, provide a basis for sustainable development. This Plan supports the **economy** by encouraging sector coexistence. Resource mapping through SRAs is a component in refining opportunities and constraints for coexistence. This Plan supports society by recognising the strategic importance of resources and their potential benefits e.g. local produce versus imports, transport costs, visual disturbance.
Resource value (environmental, economic and societal)	Resource value derives from the societal benefit achievable through sustainable development. Value can be quantitative (e.g. economic, health, natural capital assets) and/or qualitative (e.g. aesthetic, emotional, cultural, intrinsic).

Development and introduction of SRAs

50. To support the implementation of this Plan, the marine planning authority may introduce SRAs through the publication of a MPN.

51. In deciding whether to propose the introduction of an SRA, the marine planning authority should have regard to the overall need for and benefit of the approach, together with the extent to which technical considerations allow identification of a realistic, focussed and meaningful SRA.

Consideration of sector need and benefit

52. When considering need for an SRA, the marine planning authority should have regard to:

- Whether there are realistic prospects that a sector will need to spatially expand resource use over the lifetime of the Plan;
- Whether there are realistic prospects of the loss or material disruption of a resource upon which a sector is dependent as a result of other activity;
- Whether the identification of an SRA can support meaningful forward planning by providing clarity on the distribution and availability of resources; and
- The extent to which the benefit of identifying an SRA outweighs potential adverse impact upon other sectors.

Technical considerations

53. The marine planning authority should have regard to whether it is possible, based upon technical considerations, to refine the broad RAs to identify a realistic, focussed and meaningful SRA for a sector, this includes having regard to:

- Whether it is possible to map hard constraints affecting potential resource use in order to identify with adequate confidence the spatial extent of the practically viable resource; and
- whether it is possible to identify with adequate confidence spatial resource needs of other sectors.

Developing and making a determination on an SRA

54. Where the marine planning authority proposes to introduce an SRA, it should:

- Act in accordance with the Sustainable Development (SD) Principle and the five ways of working set out in the WFGA;
- Consult upon the proposal, setting out the justification for and methodology followed in identifying the proposed SRA and the likely effect of the SRA;
- Complete relevant plan-level assessments;
- Have regard to any representations received;
- Identify the SRA by publishing an MPN; and
- Make the location of the SRA available on the marine planning portal.

55. In identifying an SRA, the marine plan authority should:

- Apply technical criteria to best represent the resource most likely to be practically and economically viable given current technologies;
- Apply other sectoral spatial needs to refine the extent of the SRA, seeking to minimise or avoid conflict and encourage coexistence;
- Identify areas where consideration may need to be given to alternative options for resource use;
- Identify environmental constraints and opportunities relevant to the SRA;
- Identify social constraints and opportunities relevant to the SRA; and
- Consider the relationship between the SRA and the objectives and relevant general and sector policies of this Plan.

Implementing and amending SRAs:

56. In order to support the implementation of an SRA the marine plan authority should:

- Keep relevant matters under review including an understanding of spatial constraints in relation to the SRA and make such evidence available from time to time;
- Keep relevant matters under review in relation to the effect of the SRA;
- Ensure the effect of the SRA is reported as part of marine planning reporting requirements; and
- Keep under review opportunities to identify areas where certain development types or targets/limits may be appropriate in future marine planning.

57. The marine plan authority may, based upon appropriate evidence and consultation and having regard to any representations received, decide to amend or withdraw an SRA through the revision or withdrawal of the relevant MPN.

Future marine spatial planning:

58. Marine planning seeks to provide greater certainty to users, developers and managers of marine resources on what, where, how and when use and development may best proceed. Spatial focus and context is an important aspect of marine planning and marine planning at an all-Wales level should be underpinned by sound knowledge of:

- the distribution of a particular resource;
- the technical availability of a resource;
- the need for use of a particular resource;
- the 'soft' constraints relating to the use of that resource; and
- the optimum way in which resources can be used including where there are trade-offs/multiple resource use options.

59. Whilst our understanding varies between sectors and will change over time as understanding, need and technologies change, marine planning will help to develop a more specific understanding on future opportunities and constraints.

60. This Plan therefore encourages, through supporting sector policies, collaboration between relevant authorities and interested parties to understand opportunities to introduce and refine SRAs through marine planning.

61. As marine planning matures, and as understanding, familiarity with the Planning system and knowledge of the evidence base develop, SRAs will be further refined and may evolve to offer greater clarity and certainty to developers and decision makers. Where there is good confidence, marine planning, over time, may not only safeguard natural resources but also identify areas for sustainable use.

The Marine Planning Framework for Wales

62. This Plan will be supported by supplementary planning documents, related planning tools and supporting evidence. Supplementary planning documents will include 1) WNMP Implementation Guidance (IG) and 2) MPNs. IG and MPNs are a relevant consideration in determinations under s.58 of the MCAA.

63. IG will be produced alongside this Plan and updated from time to time. IG will support understanding of the practical application of Plan policies and this Plan generally. Developers and decision makers should refer to the IG in conjunction with this Plan.

64. MPNs will provide guidance for implementation of Plan policies or development in specific areas. MPNs do not introduce new policy but assist in the interpretation or application of policy. MPNs will be subject to consultation.

65. SRAs will be introduced or amended via MPNs. At the time of adoption, sector priorities for establishing SRAs are aggregates, tidal stream energy and wave energy. Further SRAs may be developed for (e.g. but not restricted to) offshore wind, aquaculture and tidal lagoon sectors.

66. Other (non-SRA related) MPNs may also be produced from time to time to provide further technical guidance.

67. MPNs will be amended or withdrawn by the marine plan authority as appropriate; changes will be subject to consultation.

68. Sector activity is safeguarded by this Plan. The marine planning portal will provide information on authorised developments and patterns of established activity to facilitate application of Plan policies.

69. Other information may also constitute a relevant consideration for public authority decision makers, including other statutory or non-statutory plans, UK and/or Welsh Government policy, Cabinet Statements, plan related evidence and/or wider evidence. The decision maker will decide the appropriate weight to afford other relevant considerations on a case-by-case basis.

70. Relevant public authorities may produce guidance supporting marine plan implementation. Where such guidance exists it will likely be an important consideration. In the event of a conflict between this Plan's policy and supporting guidance, decisions should be made in accordance with this Plan's policy unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise.

71. The Welsh Ministers may, from time-to-time, issue policy or other supplementary planning guidance which would constitute a relevant consideration in relation to this Plan.

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GEN General Policy – Planning Policy

Introduction

72. This Plan supports the sustainable development of the Welsh marine area as part of delivering the shared UK vision for our seas.

73. The WFGA defines sustainable development as the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the Sustainable Development (SD) Principle, to achieve the WFGA's well-being goals. Sustainable development involves acknowledging that there are many things that determine a person's quality of life (their well-being), and that these can be broadly categorised as environmental, economic, social and cultural factors. Sustainable development connects the environment in which we live, the economy in which we work, the society of which we are a part and the cultures that we share, to people and their quality of life.

74. The sustainable development of our marine natural resources can provide significant future benefits for the environment, society, culture and economy, contributing across the goals of the WFGA.

75. In this Plan, the well-being goals have been applied as an integrated suite of high-level goals to help ensure that the fundamental relationship between improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales is recognised. This Plan's policies have been developed to work together, with the general cross cutting policies and the sector policies coming together to collectively support sustainable development.

76. The WFGA SD Principle requires public bodies to act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Transparency and accountability are fundamental to ensuring that all interests are properly represented and that the marine planning system operates in the long-term democratic public interest. The Welsh Government is committed to a marine plan-led system which provides a framework for consistent, proactive, proportionate and risk-based decision making and provides confidence by ensuring openness, fairness, impartiality and efficiency of process.

Policy

GEN_01: Planning policy

There is a presumption in favour of the sustainable development of the plan area in order to contribute to Wales' well-being goals.

GEN_02: Planning policy

Relevant public authorities should take a proportionate, risk-based approach to application of relevant marine planning policies in decision making.

Policy Aim

77. **Policies GEN_01 and GEN_02** represent the marine planning system's support for sustainable development of the marine area (in line with the WFGA and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016) through proportionate and risk-based decision making. These two policies frame and guide all decisions to ensure a resilient marine economy, society, cultural and environment.

78. Relevant public authorities, in making their decisions, should seek to maximise the contribution to the achievement of the seven well-being goals for Wales and make their decisions in accordance with the SD Principle.

79. Public authorities should take a positive and timely approach to assessing proposals for development that comply with this Plan's policies, and should seek to support proposals that will contribute to sustainable development, including the wider sustainable development of the UK.

80. Public authorities should also take a proportionate and risk-based approach to decision making, incorporating the general principles of risk management:

- proportionality between measures taken and the chosen level of protection;
- non-discrimination in application of the measures;
- consistency of the measures with similar measures already taken in similar situations or using similar approaches;
- examination of the benefits and costs of action or lack of action; and
- review of the measures in light of scientific developments.

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ECON General Policy – Achieving a Sustainable Marine Economy

Introduction

81. This Plan supports a growing marine economy through policies that guide decision making in relation to marine sectors. Increasing prosperity and well-being through job creation and sustainable economic development are key priorities for the Welsh Government; we are committed to investing in infrastructure, innovation and improving the business environment.

82. The Welsh Government recognises the economic potential associated with our marine resources as well as the role our seas play in supporting well-being. The WFGA recognises the importance of economic growth to society and guides us to work towards a prosperous Wales, defined as: 'an innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work'.

83. Healthy marine ecosystems play a fundamental role in supporting the marine economy, providing goods and services to society. Welsh marine natural resources are important assets and Welsh seas support a diverse range of activities across many sectors which make an important contribution to the economy, including through direct tangible benefits like food, oil and building materials, as well as provision of less obvious services like carbon sequestration and climate regulation.

84. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 recognises the importance of ecosystem resilience to ensuring the sustainability of economic growth. SMNR focuses on managing natural resources in a proactive, sustainable and joined-up way and using them in a way and at a rate that maintains and enhances the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide, thereby meeting the needs of current and future generations.

85. Understanding and quantifying the value of ecosystem benefits is complex. Nevertheless, this Plan contributes to the sustainable development of the marine economy of Wales through supporting the resilience of marine ecosystems as an enabler of sustainable growth.

Blue Growth opportunities:

> In this Plan, Blue Growth in Wales is defined as economic growth and development which supports social equity while ensuring our natural assets can continue to provide the resources and environmental benefits on which our well-being relies.

86. Blue Growth not only contributes to our economy but supports wider well-being objectives. This Plan supports Blue Growth by providing an integrated framework for decision making, while recognising that there are many wider factors influencing the performance of the marine economy outside the scope of marine planning. Objectives are set for the Plan as a whole and for individual sectors while sector chapters support Blue Growth through policies that guide decisions and encourage investment.

87. It is possible to broadly estimate the economic contribution of marine activities and individual sectors in terms of measures such as Gross Value Added (GVA – the value of goods and services provided) or through assessment of enterprise numbers and employment figures in each sector. There are also policy interests in potential wider supply-chain linkages across industries and in wider benefits such as those accruing to local businesses as a result of marine tourism and recreation. The marine

sector also has potential to contribute indirect, longer term benefits to the economy, for example through cost savings associated with improved health and well-being.

88. Based on the available evidence and current understanding of future issues and growth opportunities, this Plan identifies the following marine sectors as having particular potential for sustainable development over its lifetime:

- renewable energy;
- ports and shipping;
- tourism and recreation;
- aquaculture; and
- science and innovation.

89. Other sectors are nonetheless significant and also provide a wide range of essential goods and services that support our economy (fisheries, aggregates for construction, electricity cables enabling offshore energy generation, telecommunications cabling supporting growth in digital services etc.).

90. It is important that society understands and values the benefits our seas provide, including the relationship between ecosystem resilience and future sustainable development opportunities. Welsh Government will therefore:

- collaborate to develop a stronger understanding of marine sectors and their contributions to our economy;
- collaborate to further develop understanding of marine ecosystem goods and services and the benefits derived from them;
- collaborate to develop further understanding of marine and coastal historic assets and the benefits derived from them; and
- collaborate to understand the value of the marine environment to the Welsh economy and society.

91. This Plan supports sustainable economic activity at all scales through the recognition of constraints and opportunities for future use of marine natural resources and marine space. Its policies also support developers to make stronger applications for development which are clearly aligned to policy, increasing their chances of authorisation and helping their activities to become economically beneficial sooner.

92. Open knowledge and information exchange can act as an important driver for innovation and economic growth. Public authorities should therefore seek to make data and information openly available wherever possible.

Supporting economically sustainable activities

93. The Welsh Government is working to maintain and grow local and national economies through new sustainable activities, including in the marine area, to provide jobs and income for local people and lead to the provision of goods and services that add value locally, nationally and internationally.

94. We are working with the business community to help businesses thrive, in order to support sustainable development with investment in our marine environment and economy leading to increased marine-related GVA. We will continue to work with partners across industry and local and central Government so that businesses are supported and contribute to the well-being of society by making sustainable use of our marine natural resources.

Policy

ECON_01: Sustainable economic growth

Proposals for economically sustainable activities are encouraged, particularly where they contribute to:

- **the sustainable management of natural resources thereby supporting ecosystem resilience;**
- **a more resilient economy;**
- **employment opportunities particularly for coastal communities;**
- **protecting and creating employment at all skill levels;**
- **maintaining communities with a high-density of Welsh speakers; and/or**
- **tackling poverty by supporting deprived coastal communities.**

Policy Aim

95. **Policy ECON_01** recognises that sustainable development of the marine environment has the potential to increase the prosperity and well-being of the people of Wales. Use of our marine resources should be managed in order to optimise the value (in a broad sense) of the marine area to the people of Wales, while supporting social objectives and values, including the well-being of future generations, and maintaining and enhancing the resilience of marine ecosystems through SMNR.

96. Proposals that provide or promote opportunities to support the economy are therefore encouraged by this policy, particularly activities identified as having good potential for sustainable growth.

97. Proposals should demonstrate how they will be economically sustainable, including consideration of value for money, benefits (and any potential costs) to society and support for the development of marine-related skills. Proposals should also identify ways in which their proposal could have both positive and adverse impacts on the Welsh language (see **Policy SOC_04**).

Supporting coexistence

98. Coexistence is where multiple developments, activities or uses can exist alongside or close to each other in the same place and/or at the same time. Coexistence is already common in the marine environment. Co-location is a subset of coexistence and is where multiple developments, activities or uses coexist in the same place by sharing the same footprint or area.

99. As development and use of the marine environment continues to increase, there will be increased competition for space, greater interaction between activities and opportunity for coexistence.

100. The marine planning process identifies current and potential opportunities for use of marine resources and space for different sectors, helping to manage potential conflict and promote sustainable development.

101. Proposals that facilitate coexistence will be varied, e.g. certain infrastructure projects could offer significant amenity and leisure opportunities for local communities and/or tourism. Alternatively, there could be scope for development, e.g. new aquaculture through co-locating development.

102. Promoting coexistence, where appropriate, will help to optimise the use of the marine area.

Policy

ECON_02: Coexistence

Proposals should demonstrate how they have considered opportunities for coexistence with other compatible sectors in order to optimise the value and use of the marine area and marine natural resources.

Policy Aim

103. This Plan supports coexistence of relevant activities and uses by encouraging proposals to consider opportunities to bring together differing but compatible activities to make the best possible use of marine space and natural resources.

104. Under **Policy ECON_02**, proposals should set out how potential opportunities for coexistence with other activities have been assessed and how realising these opportunities could optimise the value and sustainable use of the Plan area. Proposals should demonstrate the extent to which they will coexist with other activities and how this will be achieved. Consideration should also be given to the coexistence of activities and developments in adjacent marine planning areas and at the land-sea interface in order to optimise the value and sustainable use of wider resources. It is recognised projects may not be able to identify realistic coexistence opportunities.

SOC General Policy – Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society

Introduction

105. Our seas are an intrinsic part of our history, economy and way of life. Over 60% of the population of Wales lives and works on the coast, with all of the major Welsh cities and many important towns also located at the coast. This Plan section includes policies relating to a range of social issues including coastal communities; heritage; coastal change and flooding; and climate change.

Coastal communities

106. For the coastal communities of Wales, particularly those far from major cities, the sea and its associated activities play a significant role in well-being, providing jobs and opportunities for recreational activities and by supporting cultural diversity and a sense of heritage. However, many coastal communities have the opportunity to derive even greater benefit from our seas and there is a need to adapt to challenges such as increased risk of flooding or changes in leisure time.

107. Our coastal environments have the potential to be among the most attractive in Europe for living, working and visiting, where people live longer, healthier lives in well-designed, connected and sustainable places with good access to amenities and services. In such communities, people value, protect and enhance the built and natural environment for the well-being of present and future generations.

Access to the marine environment

108. Access to the marine environment relates to the ability to get to and/or take part in the activities and services provided by or in the marine environment. Access to the marine plan area is necessary for both enjoyment and use, including through recreation and tourism, and contributes to sustainable development, including health and well-being.

109. Accessing coastal environments can have a significant impact on supporting people to improve their mental and physical health. It can provide opportunities for low-income households, particularly children and young people, to experience their natural surroundings and learn from them.

Policy

SOC_01: Access to the marine environment

Proposals that maintain or enhance access to the marine environment are encouraged.

Policy Aim

110. **Policy SOC_01** recognises the importance, as outlined above, of maintaining and enhancing access to the marine plan area, ensuring people are able to get to and take part in the activities and services provided by the marine environment. This policy therefore aims to ensure appropriate consideration of the potential impacts of developments and activities on wider access to the marine environment. Specifically, where possible and appropriate, developments should be designed and managed in a way that facilitates inclusive access, or does not constrain current access, to the marine environment. Equally, public authorities should support access to the marine environment where possible and appropriate, while also considering the risks and potential adverse impacts of enhanced access in some cases.

111. **Policy SOC_01** therefore aims to contribute towards sustainable development and the achievement of the WFGA goals by helping to support the health and well-being of coastal communities and safeguarding access to the recreational and well-being benefits associated with the marine environment.

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Well-being of coastal communities

112. The sea plays a significant role in contributing to the well-being of coastal communities at a local level. The communities around our coast are diverse and a successful policy approach in one area may be inappropriate in another. The right development in the right place may aid adaptation or provide a regenerative boost, but equally it could have a negative impact upon the intrinsic environmental characteristics and qualities on which the prosperity and well-being of the community depend. A key part of this is the varying linguistic profiles of communities around our coast, with some having a greater density of Welsh-speaking population than others. It is therefore important to consider available evidence at a local scale and strike a balance between the development and regeneration of an area and the protection of characteristics that contribute to "sense of place" (including linguistic profile to ensure developments do not have a negative and disproportionate impact on the Welsh language) to ensure that the marine planning system as a whole provides net benefits for coastal communities. This will be especially important where a traditional coastal community has successfully and sustainably adapted itself to its unique circumstances and setting.

Policy

SOC_02: Well-being of coastal communities

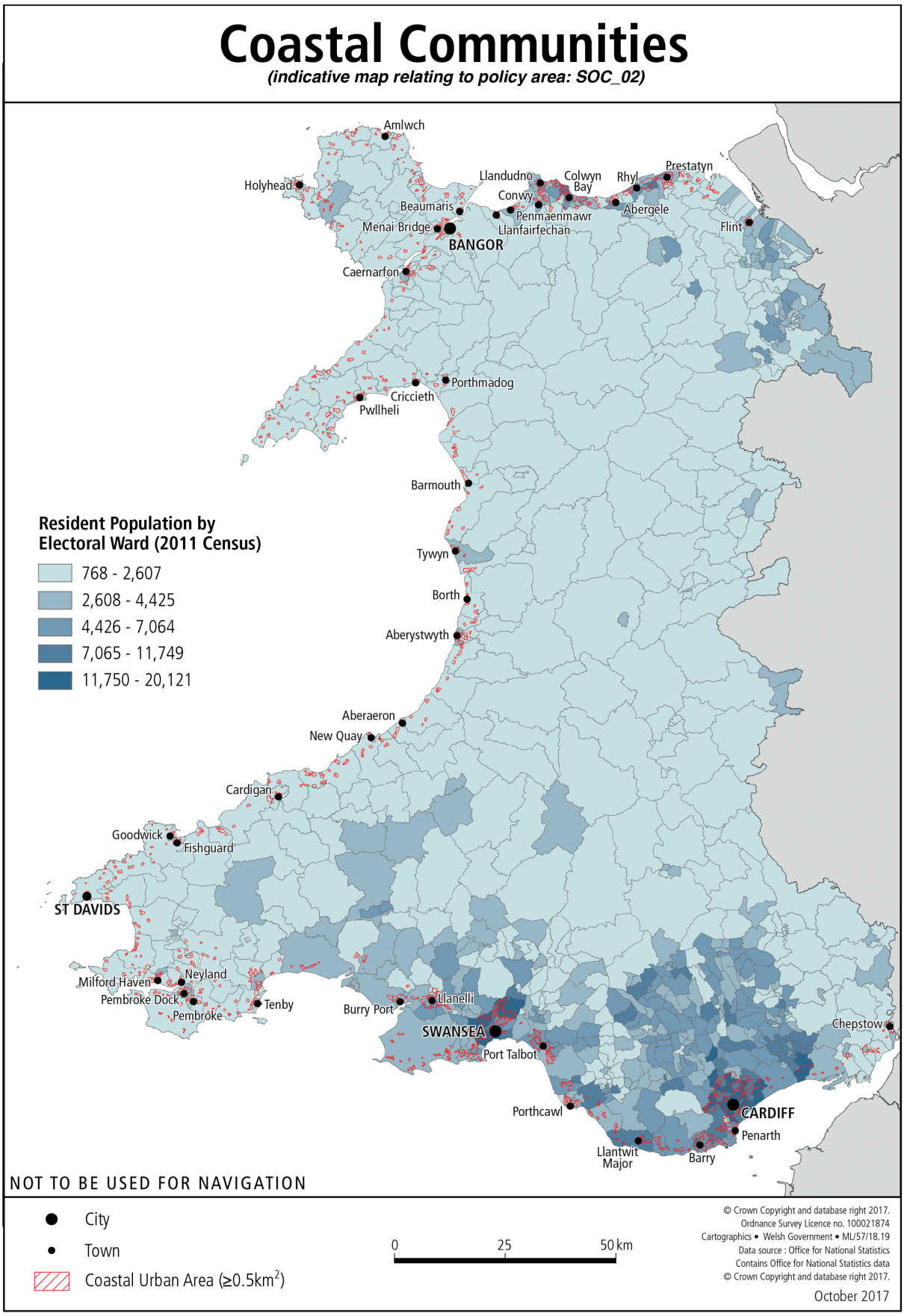
Proposals that contribute to the well-being of coastal communities are encouraged.

Policy Aim

113. **Policy SOC_02** recognises that development and use of the marine environment has the potential to affect the socio-economic future of coastal communities and decision makers should ensure that opportunities to contribute positively to the future well-being of coastal communities are taken. Among the drivers underlying this policy is the recognition that climate change can have a disproportionate effect on those most vulnerable, with those who contribute least to the problem also being those who may be most affected by climate impacts. The Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy also recognises the need for local environmental policies to support the tackling poverty agenda, and in turn make areas more resilient.

114. This policy therefore encourages opportunities to contribute positively to coastal communities to ensure that marine development supports and enhances the cultural identity and well-being of those communities for the future.

Figure 3: Coastal communities



Marine pollution incidents

115. As noted within the MPS[13], marine pollution incidents involve the release of pollutants (for example oil or chemicals) into the marine environment. While pollution is largely regarded as an environmental issue, major marine pollution incidents can have a significant adverse impact on coastal communities. This can include loss of amenity value as a result of aesthetic and biodiversity impacts, reduced visitor numbers, loss of reputation and potential health impacts.

Policy

SOC_03: Marine pollution incidents

Proposals should demonstrate how they minimise their risk of causing or contributing to marine pollution incidents.

Policy Aim

116. **Policy SOC_03** relates to non-diffuse, point sources of pollution such as oil or chemical spills and focusses on activities that involve the use, transportation or storage of chemicals, biological agents or fuels in the marine environment (whether operationally or as part of construction, maintenance or decommissioning activities). Under this policy, proposals should consider their inherent risks of causing or contributing to a major incident and act to address these risks where possible, therefore reducing the overall risk of marine pollution incidents in the marine plan area.

Promotion and facilitation of the use of the Welsh language

117. Welsh Government has a vision to increase the number of Welsh speakers, reaching a million by 2050, and is committed to increasing the use of the Welsh language. Use of the Welsh language and accessible knowledge and information about our rich cultural history, literature and communities can act as drivers for innovation, education and economic growth as well as contributing to the future well-being of our communities.

Policy

SOC_04: Welsh language and culture

Proposals that contribute to the promotion and facilitation of the use of the Welsh language and culture are encouraged.

Policy Aim

118. **Policy SOC_04** seeks to ensure that all developers and users of the marine plan area consider their impact on the Welsh language and Welsh culture and seek to identify opportunities to promote the Welsh language and facilitate its use in their sector and beyond. Equally, public authorities should facilitate participation in decision making through the medium of Welsh.

119. Through promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language and Welsh culture **Policy SOC_04** contributes to the enhancement of cultural identity and the well-being of coastal communities as well as aligning with WFGA goals and Welsh Government targets to increase the number of Welsh speakers.

Heritage

120. Thousands of years of trade, exploration, defence, industry and leisure have created a rich and varied historic environment in Welsh waters and along our coast which includes medieval castles, Victorian fortifications, small fishing harbours, industrial ports and 19th century seaside resorts. The sea is an essential part of the character of many conservation areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Parks, and the setting of numerous Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments. **Policies SOC_05 to SOC_07** set out requirements to optimise benefits from the historic environment, designated landscapes, seascape and character.

13 MPS Chapter 2, Section 2.6.4.

Historic environment

121. The coastal historic environment is central to Wales' culture and its character contributes to our sense of place, cultural identity and heritage. Our underwater heritage is equally rich. Whilst shipwrecks capture the imagination, just as extraordinary are our submerged and intertidal landscapes, dating back thousands of years. Innovative seabed mapping has only just begun to highlight the potential for submerged landscapes to yield further remarkable archaeology.

122. As recognised by the MPS[14], the historic environment can drive sustainable economic development, attracting tourism and providing enjoyable places in which to live and work. It is important that the historic environment is appreciated, protected and accessible for present and future generations. Historic assets of national significance are protected through designation such as Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wreck Sites and Listed Buildings. Areas of distinctive local character and historic significance may be designated as Conservation Areas. Historic parks and gardens may be included on the statutory register of historic parks and gardens in Wales. There are also relevant non-statutory designations which are material considerations in the terrestrial planning system such as World Heritage Sites and Landscapes of Outstanding or Special Historic Interest. However, the absence of designated historic assets should not be taken to imply that non-designated historic assets are automatically of lesser significance.

Policy

SOC_05: Historic assets

Proposals should demonstrate how potential impacts on historic assets and their settings have been taken into consideration and should, in order of preference:

a. avoid adverse impacts on historic assets and their settings; and/or

b. minimise impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or

c. mitigate impacts where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Opportunities to enhance historic assets are encouraged.

Policy Aim

123. **Policy SOC_05** recognises the importance of appreciating and protecting our coastal and underwater historic environment and making it accessible to present and future generations. Development and use of the marine environment can, however, affect historic assets both directly and indirectly, including: loss of, or damage to, historic material; alteration to the setting of historic assets which can positively or negatively affect the ability to understand and appreciate them or through burial or exposure (e.g. due to changing patterns of sediment movement).

124. Under **Policy SOC_05** proposals should therefore demonstrate appropriate consideration of the potential impacts of developments and activities on historic assets and their settings in order to prevent substantial loss of or harm to assets as a result of inappropriate or uninformed development. This policy also aims to ensure that opportunities to better understand the significance of historic assets are encouraged and promoted. **Policy SOC_05** should therefore contribute towards sustainable development by helping to protect our historic environment and supporting opportunities for tourism and recreation.

14 MPS Chapter 2, Section 2.6.6.2.

Designated landscapes

125. Landscape is the result of the interaction between human and natural processes[15]. People relate to landscapes as places to live, work and enjoy. Landscapes provide a range of cultural benefits contributing to our sense of place, well-being and quality of life. Delivering these multiple benefits, landscapes can also provide the framework for the integrated management of natural resources at a variety of scales.

126. Many of Wales' coastal landscapes are recognised as dramatic, scenic areas with layers of cultural and linguistic tradition that enhance their diversity and character. Some of these landscapes are particularly valued by society and are designated under UK legislation through the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949) as National Parks or under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as AONBs. These statutory designations are put in place in order to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and culture and, in the case of National Parks, for the recreation opportunities that they provide.

127. Designated Landscapes are acknowledged at an international level by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as Category V Protected Areas, valued as living landscapes for their interaction between natural and human elements. Five of the eight Welsh Designated Landscapes were designated on account of their spectacular coastal scenery and coastal character. In Pembrokeshire, Wales has the UK's only fully coastal National Park. Some 54% of the Welsh coast is designated as either a National Park or AONB[16].

128. There are also a number of non-statutory designations including Heritage Coasts and Registered Historic Landscapes. Some 42% of Wales' coastline is defined as Heritage Coast; often this is contiguous with other designations such as National Parks or AONBs. These non-statutory designations were defined to protect stretches of scenic and undeveloped coastline from unsuitable development.

Policy

SOC_06: Designated landscapes

Proposals should demonstrate how potential impacts on the purposes and special qualities for which National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have been designated have been taken into consideration and should, in order of preference:

a. avoid adverse impacts on designated landscapes; and/or

b. minimise impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or

c. mitigate impacts where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Opportunities to enhance designated landscapes are encouraged.

Policy Aim

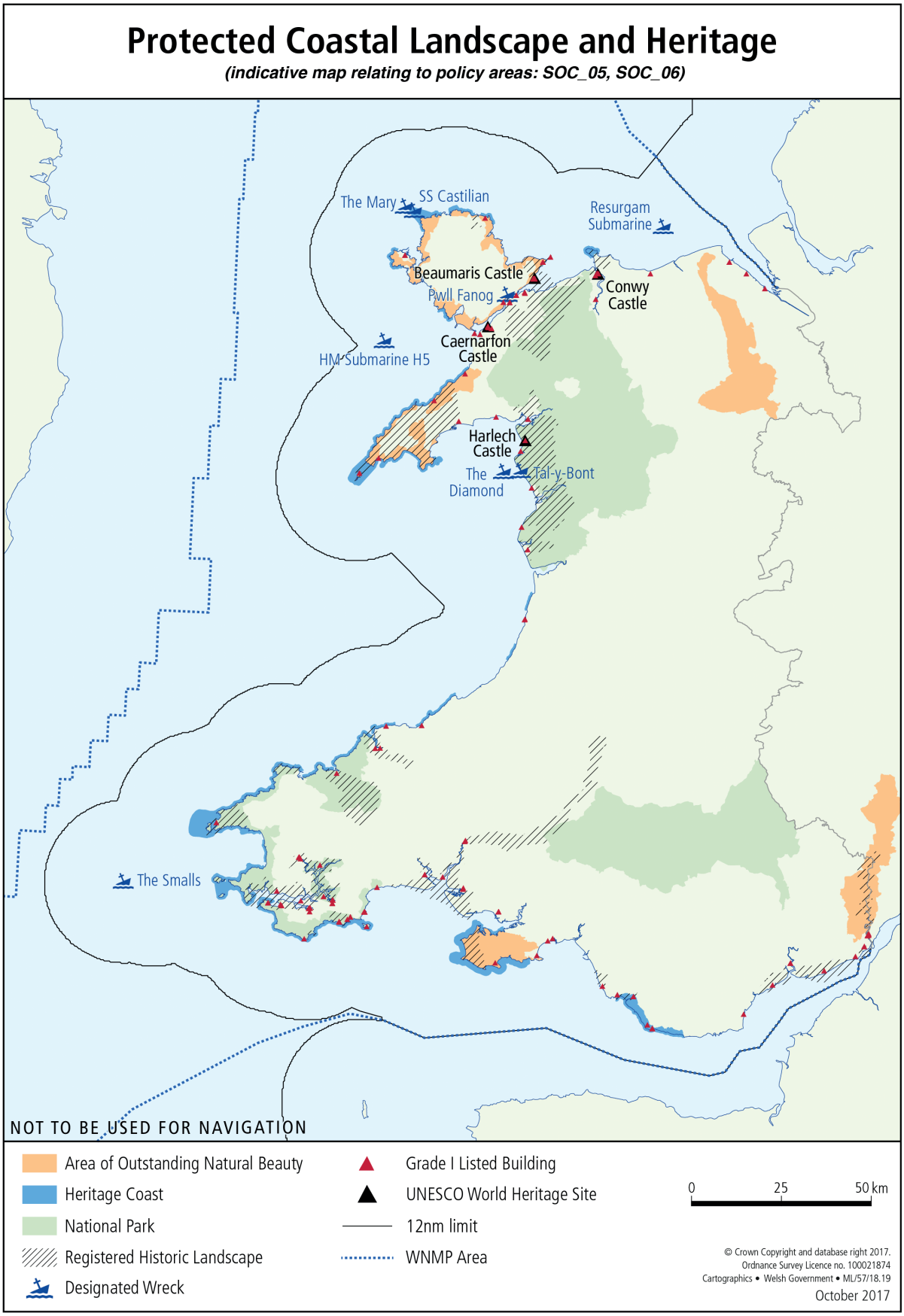
129. **Policy SOC_06** recognises that resilient, diverse, multifunctional landscapes supported by sustainable management practices can provide a range of services and opportunities with the potential to contribute to the achievement of social objectives and improve health and well-being as well as delivering economic benefit.

130. Under this policy, proposals should demonstrate appropriate consideration of the potential impacts of developments and activities on designated landscapes. This policy also encourages opportunities to contribute positively to the protection or enhancement of these areas. National Parks and AONBs are of equal status in terms of landscape and scenic beauty and both should be afforded protection from inappropriate developments.

15 The European Landscape Convention definition of landscape as "an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors" is cited in the MPS Chapter 2, Section 2.6.5.

16 NRW Geographic Information System (GIS) 2016.

Figure 4: Protected coastal landscape and heritage



Seascapes

131. In the context of this Plan, landscapes within coastal and marine areas are known as "seascapes" and include "landscapes with views of the coast or seas, and coasts and the adjacent marine environment with cultural, historical and archaeological links with each other", as defined by the MPS Chapter 2, Section 2.6.5.

132. Wales has a varied and attractive coastline with seascapes that have been influenced by and support a wide range of activities and uses. The strong sense of place and unique character that is typical of our coastal environment makes an important contribution to our national health and well-being. A key reason why individuals would wish to locate to our coastal areas is the high quality of life and opportunities for outdoor recreation such places can offer. Equally, the potential for tourism and recreation along our coasts can attract businesses to locate to coastal areas.

133. Developments in the inshore marine planning region may change the character around the Welsh coastline. Such changes are already happening. Over the lifetime of this Plan there is likely to be ongoing change to the seascape character of Wales, resulting most prominently from further marine renewable infrastructure, particularly off the North Wales and South Wales coasts. These changes are an inevitable result of our aspirations to derive greater benefits from our seas for current and future generations.

Policy

SOC_07: Seascapes

Proposals should demonstrate how potential impacts on seascapes have been taken into consideration and should, in order of preference:

a. avoid adverse impacts on seascapes; and/or

b. minimise impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or

c. mitigate impacts where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

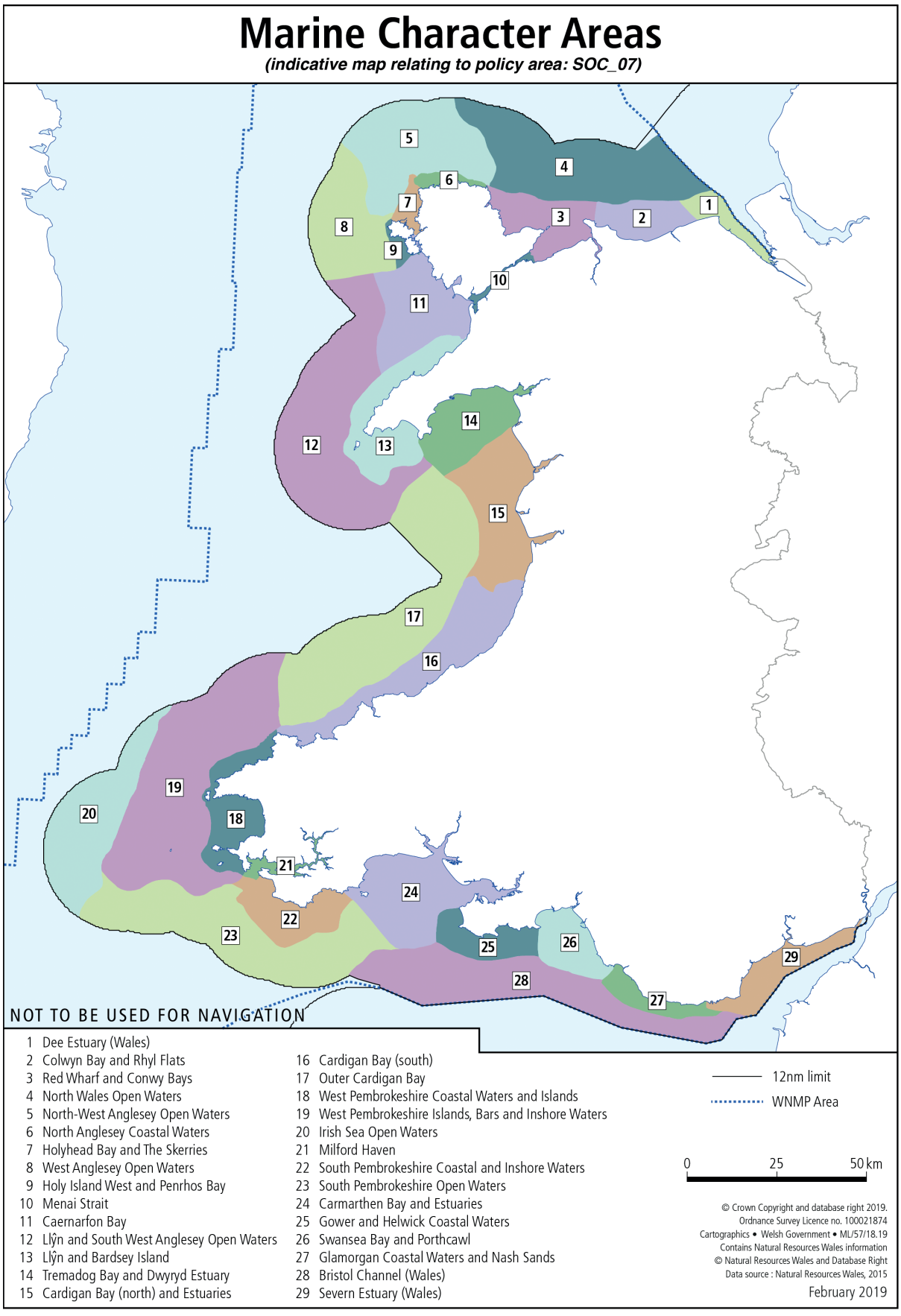
Opportunities to enhance seascapes are encouraged.

Policy Aim

134. Developments, activities and management measures have the potential to change the character and visual resources of an area. All seascapes are of value, providing an important role in terms of both local and visitor perceptions of an area and forming a key part of the unique selling point of coastal areas that support our coastal communities. **Policy SOC_07** therefore aims to ensure appropriate consideration of the potential impacts of developments and activities on seascapes whilst also encouraging opportunities to contribute positively to the protection or enhancement of these areas.

135. Where there is the potential to significantly change the seascape of an area through proposed developments or plan-making, under **Policy SOC_07** the impacts and relative value of the altered seascape should be considered as part of decision making. Seascape concerns in themselves need not be a barrier to sensitively sited and designed development and considering seascapes at an early stage should be seen as an approach that can be helpful to identify more widely acceptable solutions and to help steer the right development to the right place.

Figure 5: Marine character areas



Coastal change and flooding

136. As set out in the MPS Chapter 2, Section 2.6.8, coastal change consists of natural physical changes to the shoreline, for example erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation and shoreline accretion, as well as man-made physical changes such as coastal defence and infrastructure developments, managed realignment and habitat creation.

137. Coastal erosion is occurring along 23% of the Welsh coastline[17] and presents challenges in locations where it threatens communities and infrastructure. The coast is inherently dynamic and subject to change, with overall rates of erosion occurring gradually over relatively long periods of time. However, erosion can happen in episodic sudden events. Climate change is expected to contribute towards greater rates of coastal change over the coming decades. With sea levels forecast to rise, low-lying land that currently drains naturally at low tide is likely to be flooded for longer periods or become permanently submerged. This expected sea level rise, along with increased extreme weather, is likely to result in an increased risk of flooding and coastal erosion.

138. Coastal erosion and flooding can directly affect human and economic activity. They can change coastal landscapes, weaken sea defences, and put at risk coastal buildings (including built heritage), infrastructure networks (including ports, marinas, roads, rail and energy) and people.

139. Coastal change and flooding can also significantly impact our natural resources. Much of our marine environment is designated for its environmental significance (see **Policy ENV_02** and associated map) and changes to vulnerable coastal habitats such as salt marshes, sand dunes and foreshores may have consequences for biodiversity and the future provision of other ecosystem services, such as cultural services that help support the coastal tourism industry. Climate change may also result in increased storminess, less suitable conditions and increased damage to coastal facilities.

140. Coastal flood risk is a particularly important national issue. Historically the traditional approaches to managing the risks of coastal change and flooding have been centred on the principles of defence. An estimated 415 km of man-made sea defence structures exist to protect our coastal communities and to protect over £8 billion of coastal assets in Wales[18]. As communities have developed, so too has a significant network of flood defences, coastal protection and drainage infrastructure which help to reduce the risks faced. Maintaining existing defences, as well as constructing new defences, continues to be a significant activity around the coast of Wales. Although these arrangements will continue to form an important element of our coastal defence, and are still working in most parts of Wales, the effects of climate change mean that the pressure on our existing infrastructure will increase significantly. It is unsustainable and unaffordable to build increasingly large defence structures and no matter how large the defence structure, there is always a risk that it will be breached or over-topped. Therefore, there will always be a residual risk that defence alone cannot address.

141. Coastal management can be designed to create habitats and enable adaptation. In recognition of the issues associated with coastal change and flooding, Welsh Government has led a move to a system focused around the principles of risk management. This approach is underpinned by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, and the first steps to addressing this include the publication of Welsh Government's National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management and the introduction of Flood Risk Management Plans.

17 UK Marine Monitoring and Assessment Strategy (UKMMAS) 2010a.
18 Wales Audit Office, 2009.

142. This strategy has been accompanied by the development of national coastal erosion and flood risk maps (Figures 6, 7a and 7b) and the adoption of Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs). The aim of the SMPs is to secure a more sustainable, longer-term shoreline management approach, which is more resilient to climate change, particularly sea-level rise. The non-statutory plans provide important context for decision making on the coast by setting out preferred policies for how the coast should be managed (Hold the Line, No Active Intervention, Managed Realignment, Advance the Line) over three epochs: 0-20 years, 20-50 years and 50-100 years working from a base date of 2005.

143. The integration of marine and terrestrial planning and decision making is key in addressing the issues associated with coastal change and flooding.

Policy

SOC_08: Resilience to coastal change and flooding

Proposals should demonstrate how they are resilient to coastal change and flooding over their lifetime.

SOC_09: Effects on coastal change and flooding

Proposals should demonstrate how they:

- **avoid significant adverse impacts upon coastal processes; and**
- **minimise the risk of coastal change and flooding;**

Proposals that align with the relevant Shoreline Management Plan(s) and its policies are encouraged.

Policy Aim

144. **Policies SOC_08** and **SOC_09** introduce requirements for proposals to consider both their likelihood to be affected by coastal change and flooding and their own potential impact on these processes.

145. Under **Policy SOC_08**, developments and activities should appropriately assess the risk of coastal change and flooding over the lifetime of the project and, where appropriate, include measures to address this risk and increase their resilience to coastal change.

146. Due to the risks of coastal change and flooding, coastal development should preferably be sited in areas less vulnerable to flooding and erosion, although there may be exceptions if a specific location is essential for operational reasons or infrastructure cannot be located elsewhere.

147. In line with SMP policy, proposals to develop areas at risk of flooding/erosion and with a 'no active intervention' or 'managed alignment' policy in the SMP for any epoch relevant to the lifetime of the development should not be permitted. Equally, areas at high risk from flooding should not be developed (Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15[19]).

148. **Policy SOC_09** aims to ensure that proposed activities will not have significant adverse impacts on coastal processes and will not result in an increased risk of coastal change and flooding. This policy also encourages proposals that take account of relevant plans and policies in order to achieve this.

149. Proposals associated with development and use of the marine environment should demonstrate how they will reduce the risk of coastal change. Measures that work with natural processes, assist in adapting to climate change and improve resilience of ecosystems and coastal communities are also encouraged.

19 Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk.

Figure 6: Flood Risk

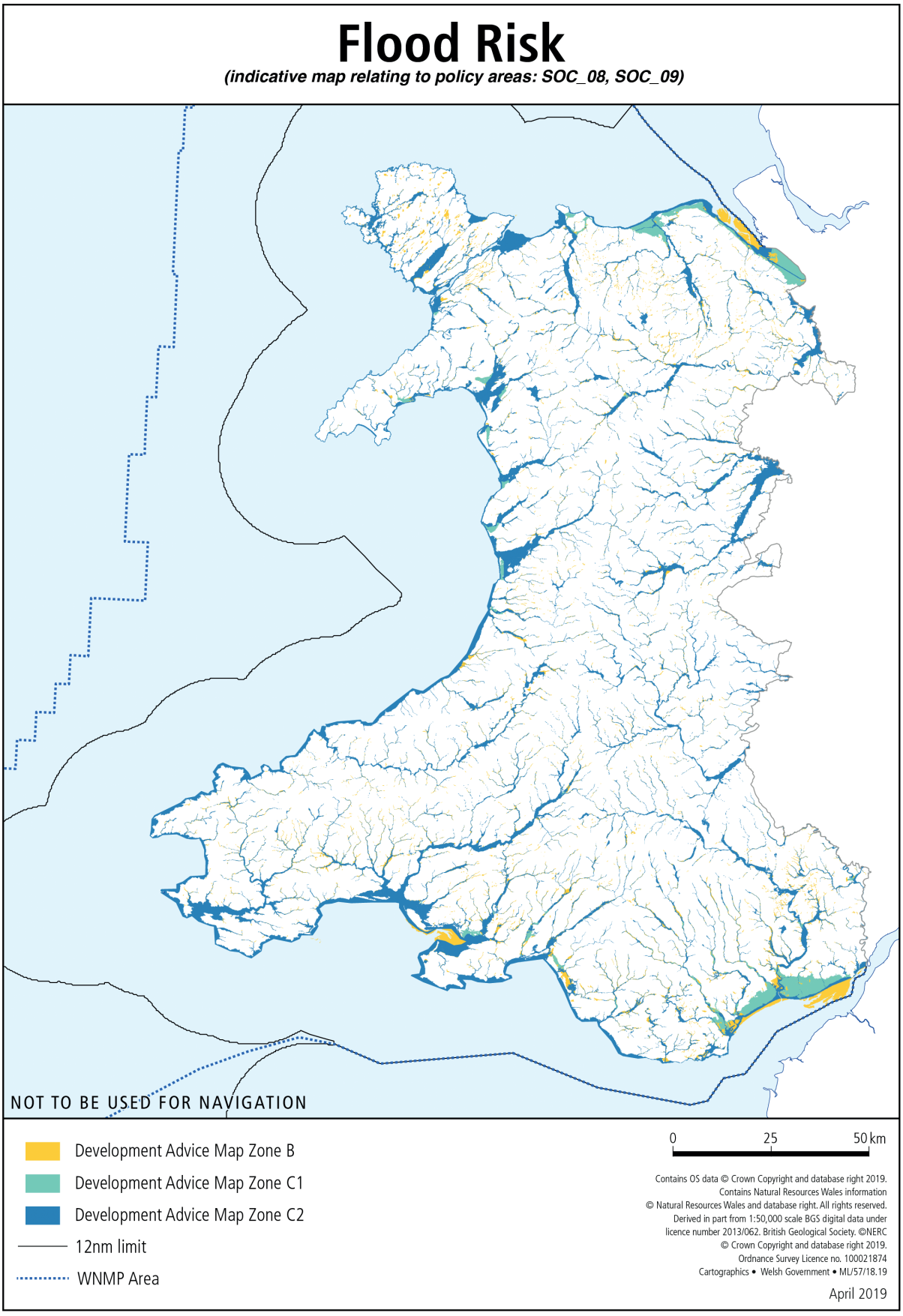
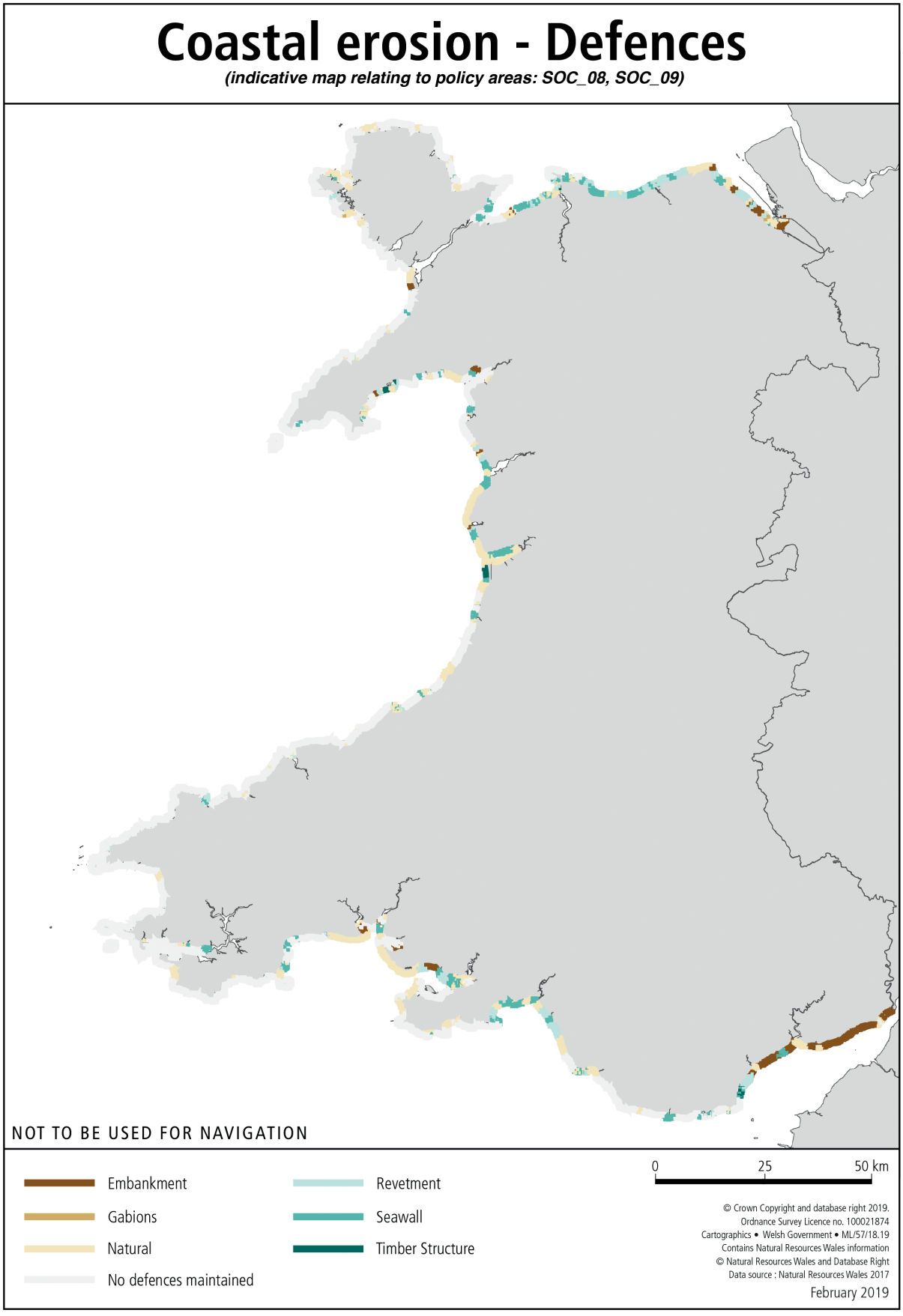


Figure 7(a): Coastal erosion – Shoreline Management Plans

Figure 7(b): Coastal erosion – Defences



Climate change

150. The scientific case that the climate is changing and that human activity is playing a significant role is clear[20]. Climate change poses a series of challenges to our marine environment and the communities and businesses that rely on it. Impacts, as recognised by the MPS [21], include sea level rise, increased flood risk and changes to biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as associated impacts on health and well-being.

151. There are two key ways to take action on climate change – mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation aims to slow the rate of change and lessen its impacts by reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases (or enhance the sinks that can absorb the gases). Adaptation helps protect against the impacts of climate change by taking appropriate action to prevent or minimise the damage to socio-economic and natural systems. It also involves identifying and taking advantage of opportunities that may arise from climate change. The future costs and risks of inaction far outweigh the costs of taking action now. Furthermore, delaying action on the negative impacts of climate change will only make it more expensive and difficult to overcome in the future.[22]

152. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 sets a legal target of reducing emissions by at least 80% by 2050 and places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to set a series of interim targets (for 2020, 2030, and 2040) and five yearly carbon budgets.[23] The budgets will set limits on the total emissions in Wales over a five year period and act as stepping stones to ensure regular progress is being made towards the long term target. The Act also requires Welsh Ministers to publish a Delivery Plan setting out their proposals and policies broken down, for each carbon budgetary period, providing certainty to drive investment for a low-carbon economy.

Policy

SOC_10: Minimising climate change

Proposals should demonstrate how they, in order of preference:

a. avoid the emission of greenhouse gases; and/or

b. minimise them where they cannot be avoided; and/or

c. mitigate them where they cannot be minimised.

Where significant emission of greenhouse gases cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals for regulated activities must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

SOC_11: Resilience to climate change

Proposals should demonstrate that they have considered the impacts of climate change and have incorporated appropriate adaptation measures, taking into account Climate Change Risk Assessments for Wales.

Proposals that contribute to climate change adaptation and/or mitigation are encouraged.

Policy Aim

153. The emission of greenhouse gases should be minimised wherever possible, particularly in the context of larger scale developments and infrastructure projects. **Policy SOC_10** aims to ensure that proposals consider all emissions directly related to the proposed development or activity (including greenhouse gases associated with construction and operation) as well as emissions indirectly related to the development or activity (such as increased journey lengths for vessels arising from a development).

20 5th Synthesis Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report.
21 MPS Chapter 2, Section 2.6.7.
22 Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change.
23 **https://gov.wales/environment-wales-act-2016-climate-change**.

154. **Policy SOC_11** aims to ensure that proposals assess the likely impacts of the predicted extent of climate change on developments or activities and their use of the marine environment. Where necessary, public authorities should be satisfied that adequate risk management or contingency plans are in place to increase the resilience of developments to climate change. Under this policy, proposals are also encouraged to include measures contributing towards climate change mitigation and adaptation.

ENV General Policy – Living within Environmental Limits

Introduction

155. Marine ecosystems are dynamic and provide a range of goods and services upon which we depend, such as a healthy food source, protection against natural disasters and the regulation of our climate. A resilient and biodiverse marine environment also has its own intrinsic value, contributing to our well-being, cultural identity and sense of place. It is important that marine ecosystems and the habitats and species they support are resilient and able to adapt to change and impacts so we can continue to benefit from the goods, services and wider well-being benefits they can provide. This section of the Plan therefore sets out policies that promote the protection and enhancement of the marine environment to ensure that we have resilient marine ecosystems that can meet the needs of future generations.

Good Environmental Status (GES) and the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR)

156. The UK Marine Strategy puts in place a framework to safeguard our seas for future generations. Its goal is to achieve or maintain GES in coastal and marine waters. GES is defined through 11 "Descriptors" covering the whole marine environment. The UK Marine Strategy sets out, at Descriptor level, a range of targets, a monitoring programme and set of measures to achieve or maintain GES. The MPS (Chapter 2, Section 2.6.1) recognises that marine planning will be a key tool in implementing these measures.

157. Achieving GES means applying an ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities. In this context this means ensuring that the collective pressure of human activities is kept within the levels compatible with the achievement of GES, ensuring that the capacity of the marine ecosystem to respond to human-induced changes is not compromised, whilst enabling the sustainable use of the marine environment now and in the future.

158. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 seeks to promote SMNR. The objective of SMNR is to maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide. Principles for delivering SMNR are set out in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and complement the UK Marine Strategy's 11 Descriptors of GES.

159. The policies set out in this Plan play a key role in delivering SMNR and support the achievement of GES. Table 5 sets out the relationship between policies in this Plan and the 11 Descriptors that represent the key aspects of GES. Proposals/developments will contribute to UK Marine Strategy Descriptors and the achievement of GES if they comply with Plan policies and relevant consenting processes. Some Descriptors are addressed by specific Plan policies, whilst others are supported by implicit contributions across multiple policies.

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Table 5: Plan policies that support the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES)

Descriptor number and description		WNMP support to achieving GES	Plan Policies
D1	The quality and occurrence of habitats and the distribution and abundance of species are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions.	Plan policies recognise the inherent value that biodiversity has to the Welsh environment, society, culture and economy. Commitments to the sustainable use of natural resources, enhancing ecosystem resilience, supporting an ecologically coherent network of MPAs and legislative requirements for proposals to adequately assess their environmental impacts (individually and cumulatively) support UK Marine Strategy requirements for biological diversity to be maintained (and where appropriate recovered).	ENV_01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07 SOC_06, 09 GOV_01
D2	Non-indigenous species introduced by human activities are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems.	Plan policies on the introduction and spread of Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) and ecosystem resilience support UK Marine Strategy requirements to manage the impact on ecology, society and economy.	ENV_01; 03 GOV_01
D3	Populations of all commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within safe biological limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock.	Plan policies safeguarding a resilient marine ecosystem (including important areas for feeding, breeding and migration) contribute to sustainable commercial fishing, supporting UK Marine Strategy requirements for healthy, productive and sustainable fish stocks.	ENV_01, 07 GOV_01 FIS_01
D4	All elements of the marine food webs, to the extent that they are known, occur at normal abundance and diversity and levels capable of ensuring the long-term abundance of the species and the retention of their full reproductive capacity.	Plan policies for a sustainable, productive and resilient marine environment which promotes healthy, functioning marine ecosystems and protects marine habitats and species support the long-term abundance of the components of food webs and the retention of their full reproductive capacity as required by the UK Marine Strategy.	ENV_01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07 GOV_01
D5	Human-induced eutrophication is minimised, especially adverse effects thereof, such as losses in biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, harmful algae blooms and oxygen deficiency in bottom waters.	Plan policies on air and water quality in combination with the sustainable use of natural resources, enhancing ecosystem resilience and legislative requirements for proposals to adequately assess their environmental impacts (individually and cumulatively) support UK Marine Strategy requirements to minimise eutrophication and its effects.	ENV_01, 02, 06 GOV_01

Descriptor number and description		WNMP support to achieving GES	Plan Policies
D6	Sea-floor integrity is at a level that ensures that the structure and functions of the ecosystems are safeguarded and benthic ecosystems, in particular, are not adversely affected.	Plan policies on legislative requirements for proposals to adequately assess their environmental impacts (individually and cumulatively) and the sustainable use of natural resources, enhancing ecosystem resilience, support UK Marine Strategy requirements to maintain seafloor integrity.	ENV_01, 02, 03, 07 GOV_01 FIS_01
D7	Permanent alteration of hydrographical conditions does not adversely affect marine ecosystems.	Plan policies recognise the importance of the physical parameters of seawater (temperature, salinity, depth, currents, waves, turbulence and turbidity) and the need to manage human activities which could impact the dynamics of the ecosystem to support this UK Marine Strategy requirement.	SOC_09, 10 ENV_01, 02 GOV_01
D8	Contaminants are at a level not giving rise to pollution effects.	Plan policies on air and water quality in combination with the sustainable use of natural resources, enhancing ecosystem resilience and legislative requirements for proposals to adequately assess their environmental impacts (individually and cumulatively) support UK Marine Strategy requirements to prevent and reduce contaminant inputs.	ENV_06 SOC_01 GOV_01
D9	Contaminants in fish and other seafood for human consumption do not exceed levels established by Community legislation or other relevant standards.	Plan policies on water quality in combination with the sustainable use of natural resources, enhancing ecosystem resilience and legislative requirements for proposals to adequately assess their environmental impacts (individually and cumulatively) support UK Marine Strategy requirements for fish and other seafood to be suitable for human consumption.	SOC_01 ENV_06 GOV_01
D10	Properties and quantities of marine litter do not cause harm to the coastal and marine environment.	Plan policies to manage marine litter at source contribute to the UK Marine Strategy requirement to reduce the introduction of litter, including plastics and microplastic, into the marine environment.	ENV_04 GOV_01
D11	Introduction of energy, including underwater noise, is at levels that do not adversely affect the marine environment.	Plan policies to manage input levels of underwater noise and legislative requirements for proposals to adequately assess their environmental impacts (individually and cumulatively) support UK Marine Strategy requirements on managing the adverse effects of anthropogenic impulsive noise.	ENV_05 GOV_01

Protection, restoration and enhancement of marine ecosystems

160. Biodiversity is the variety of life found on earth and includes all species of plants and animals, their abundance and genetic diversity. Biodiversity has its own intrinsic value; it contributes to society's well-being, sense of place and cultural identity. Biodiversity is also a measure of success for the delivery of SMNR.

161. Geodiversity describes the variety of rocks, fossils, minerals, natural processes, landforms and soils that underlie and determine the character of our landscape and support the provision of many ecosystem services.

162. Biodiversity and geodiversity are key components of ecosystems. Any loss or damage to these can affect ecosystem functioning and the ability to adapt to change. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity can maintain or build ecosystem resilience and improve the quality of the wider environment.

163. A resilient marine ecosystem is healthy and functions in a way that it is able to adapt to change and impacts and continues to deliver the goods and services we depend on over the long term. Our economic wealth benefits from a healthy, resilient ecosystem through recreation and job creation in sectors ranging from tourism to biotechnology.

164. It is widely recognised that marine ecosystems are under pressure from a range of influences such as climate change, unsustainable human activities and the introduction of non-native species. By adopting the principles of the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity and meeting our commitments as a contracting party to Oslo and Paris Convention (OSPAR), together with implementing the UK Marine Strategy, the WFGA, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales, we are committing to maintaining and enhancing our marine ecosystems.

165. Our seas are afforded protection under a range of legislation in recognition of the diverse range of natural features they support. Collectively our legislation creates a system that provides for the conservation and protection of habitats, geodiversity and species that are considered rare, vulnerable, threatened with extinction or of principal importance to Wales.

Policy

ENV_01: Resilient marine ecosystems

Proposals should demonstrate how potential impacts on marine ecosystems have been taken into consideration and should, in order of preference:

a. avoid adverse impacts; and/or

b. minimise impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or

c. mitigate impacts where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Proposals that contribute to the protection, restoration and/or enhancement of marine ecosystems are encouraged.

Policy Aim

166. **Policy ENV_01** aims to ensure that biological and geological components of ecosystems are maintained, restored where needed and enhanced where possible, to increase the resilience of marine ecosystems and the benefits they provide. Under this policy, the sensitivities of marine ecosystems and ecosystem impacts should be taken into account when developing proposals and, where possible, proposals should also demonstrate how they will contribute to ecosystem protection, restoration and/or enhancement.

167. This approach recognises that proposals that improve or restore marine habitats, including through finding new and innovative ways to restore and enhance biodiversity, can help build the resilience of ecosystems by increasing biodiversity and supporting ecosystem functions, such as nutrient cycling, water filtration and coastal protection. As well as aligning with the aims of multiple UK Marine Strategy Descriptors, this can provide multiple benefits to society in areas such as tourism, fisheries or flood protection, ensuring we can continue to receive these benefits over the long term.

168. The Welsh Government recognises the need to work at the appropriate scale and to take a holistic and long-term approach to marine management, particularly in the context of marine ecosystems. The sustainable development of the marine area requires consideration and understanding of marine ecosystem structure and function. Marine planning and other management processes should consider ecosystem attributes and processes at all appropriate scales, particularly in cross-border areas such as estuaries where there is a need for coherent decision making based on shared evidence and joined-up, mutually supportive management practices. At the wider scale, planning, management and decision making should reflect the nature of our shared resources and broader ecosystem linkages and dependencies.

Delivering an ecologically coherent and well-managed network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

169. MPAs are areas designated as being important for conservation and are subject to specific rules regarding their management and the nature of activities that can occur within (or near) them. They are fundamental to the conservation of marine biodiversity, contributing to the health and resilience of the marine ecosystem, as recognised by the MPS[24].

A well-designed, well-managed network of MPAs can provide greater benefits to biodiversity than individual unrelated sites, which is why Welsh Government is committed to safeguarding these areas to deliver a well-managed, ecologically coherent network of MPAs that is connected and represents a diverse range of habitats and species.

170. In Wales, we already make a significant contribution towards the protection of biodiversity and the wider marine environment through our network of MPAs that currently covers approximately 75% of our coastline and 69% of the inshore Plan area. Our MPAs are of various types, reflecting the specifics of their management and governance. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), collectively known as European sites; Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs); Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); and Ramsar sites that have marine components. When taken together these MPAs form a network which contributes to UK and international networks of MPAs.

171. The identification of SRAs under this Plan involves the identification and recognition of natural resources that are important to certain sectors. The purpose of SRAs is to support the management of sector–sector interactions and provide a focus for further strategic planning. SRAs do not undermine MPA commitments or protections either in terms of site management or the designation of further MPAs. SRAs may overlap MPAs and certain human activity may not be appropriate in an SRA because of the requirement to protect MPA features (species or habitats) as set out within **Policy ENV-02**.

172. Welsh Government is committed to designating further MPAs, as needed, to complete its contribution to an ecologically coherent network. The existence of SRAs must not hinder the designation of MPAs or the completion of Wales' contribution to an ecologically coherent network of MPAs.

24 MPS Chapter 2, Section 2.6.1 and Chapter 3, Section 3.1.

However, in instances where socio-economic factors may form part of the considerations underpinning the identification of a new MPA[25], SRAs may (amongst other socio-economic considerations) contribute to the refinement of areas.

173. Working with marine stakeholders, the Welsh Government aims to maintain and improve the condition of the network of MPAs across Wales. By maintaining and achieving favourable condition of the network as a whole we will deliver on our commitments to protect, restore and enhance marine biodiversity and ensure our ecosystems are healthy[26].

Policy

ENV_02: Marine Protected Areas

Proposals should demonstrate how they:

- **avoid adverse impacts on individual Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the coherence of the network as a whole;**
- **have regard to the measures to manage MPAs; and**
- **avoid adverse impacts on designated sites that are not part of the MPA network.**

Policy Aim

174. **Policy ENV_02** ensures appropriate consideration of the potential impacts of proposals on MPAs in order to maintain the integrity of MPAs within the marine plan area and ensure the overall coherence of the MPA network. The policy safeguards these areas to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values and contributes towards achieving the targets for Descriptors 1, 4, 5 and 6 of the UK Marine Strategy.

175. Under this policy, proposals should be compliant with the legislation and policies relevant to the management of MPAs, to maintain the condition and coherence of the network as a whole. This policy also applies where proposals may impact any designated nature conservation sites that are not part of the MPA network.

176. There are a number of site designations outside the MPA network that could potentially be impacted by activities occurring in the marine and coastal environment. Such designations include SSSIs, SACs and SPAs covering a range of protected terrestrial biodiversity and geological features. Coastal geodiversity features are covered by SSSI legislation and non-statutory sites selected by Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS). Features can include coastal processes in addition to geological features exposed on the foreshore and hard or soft cliff exposures.

177. It is Welsh Government policy that all Ramsar sites be treated as if they are European Sites, and that, at the point of formal consultation, any possible new Ramsar sites, SACs, SPAs or MCZs should be treated as designated in terms of management decisions and assessment of activities.

178. Unless provisions under Regulation 29 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 or Section 126(7) of the MCAA apply, a proposal should only proceed after the public authority has determined that it will not adversely affect a designated site, either directly or in combination with other plans or projects. Approval may include an assessment and appropriate mitigation measures to ensure the integrity of the designated site is secured as a result of the proposal. However, in line with provisions under Regulation 29 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 or Section 126(7) of

25 In line with MCAA s.117(7).

26 MPA Network Management Framework for Wales: **www.gov.wales/marine-protected-area-network-management-framework-wales**.

the MCAA, a public authority can approve proposals which will adversely affect the integrity of a European Site, or MCZ if it is satisfied that:

- there are no alternative solutions to the objective of the proposal, and
- the benefit to the public of proceeding clearly outweighs the risks of damage to the environment and/or there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI).

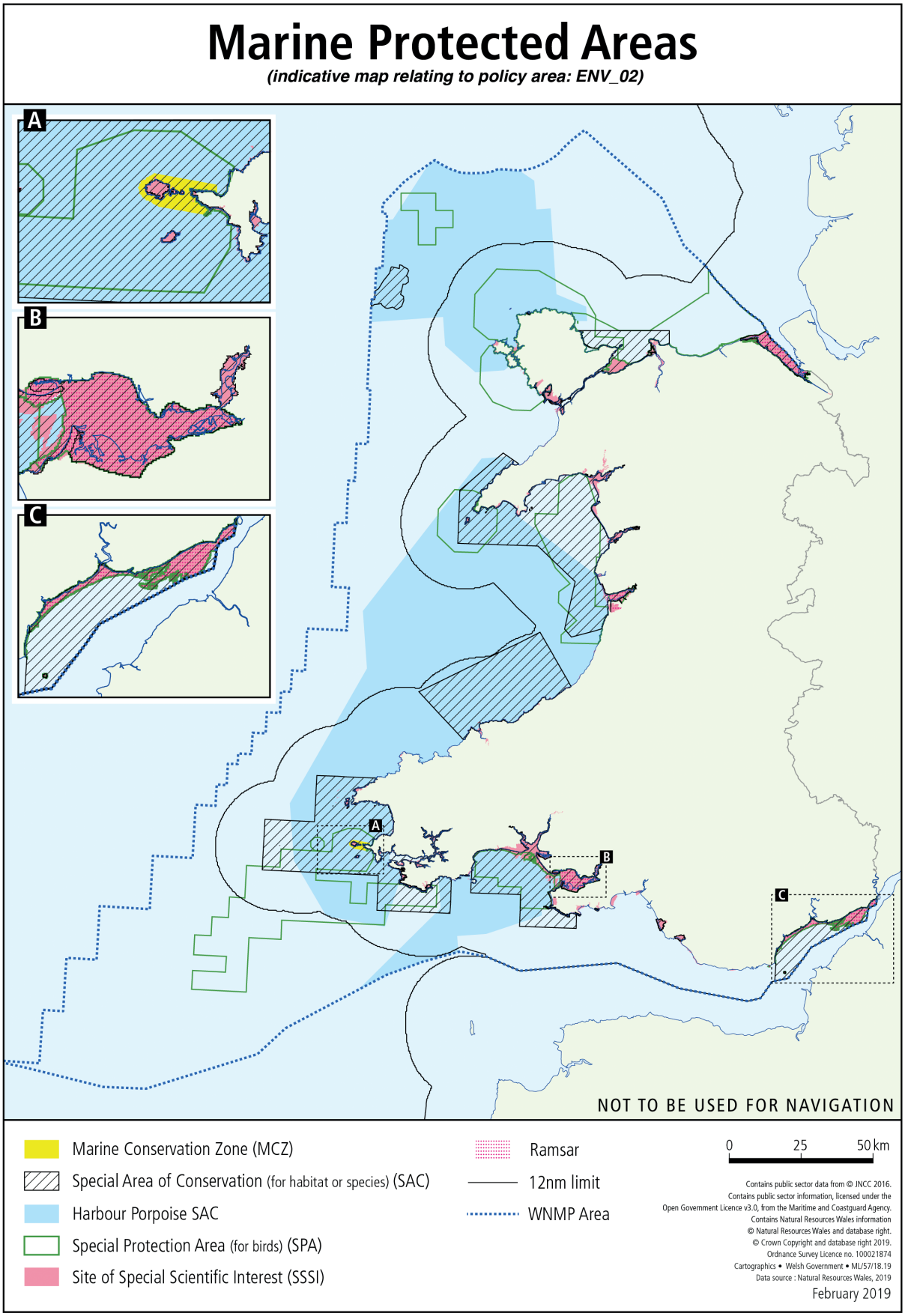
179. In such cases compensatory measures must be secured to ensure the overall coherence of the network is maintained.

180. If IROPI is likely to be applied, the appropriate authority should ensure that any necessary compensatory measures are secured to ensure the overall coherence of the network. Developers and/or relevant public authorities should engage with the appropriate authority and the relevant statutory nature conservation body at an early stage if IROPI is likely to be applied.

181. If a public authority determines that there may be a significant risk to an MCZ as a result of a proposal, as required by the MCAA, it should notify the relevant statutory nature conservation body, before deciding whether to grant authorisation.

182. Under the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, proposals should consider whether there may be any impacts to SSSIs as a result of works undertaken. The owner/occupier may also be required to restore any damage to the site. A SSSI assent may be required from NRW.

Figure 8: Marine Protected Areas



Invasive non-native species

183. Non-native species (also known as alien, non-indigenous or exotic) are species outside of their natural range. The majority of these species pose little or no risk to marine ecosystems. However, some invasive non-native species (INNS) do and can cause significant adverse impacts to biodiversity, human health and economic activity. INNS can disrupt native habitats and ecosystems, prey on or out-compete native species, spread disease and interfere with the genetic integrity of native species. Reducing the number of INNS would help to maintain and increase the diversity and resilience of our native biodiversity.

184. Descriptor 2 of the UK Marine Strategy addresses the introduction of INNS. It requires that INNS introduced by human activities are not at levels that adversely alter the ecosystem. The main pathways for the introduction of marine INNS are maritime transport (commercial and recreational), aquaculture and infrastructure developments. The eradication of INNS in the marine environment is not always feasible and can often be costly. For this reason it is important to prevent their introduction and spread.

Policy

ENV_03: Invasive non-native species

Proposals should demonstrate how they avoid or minimise the risk of introducing and spreading invasive non-native species.

Where appropriate, proposals should include biosecurity measures to reduce the risk of introducing and spreading of invasive non-native species.

Policy Aim

185. Under **Policy ENV_03**, proposals should assess the likely risk of introducing or spreading INNS and put in place reasonable biosecurity measures where necessary to reduce or stop their introduction or spread.

186. This policy recognises that incorporating biosecurity measures into proposals where appropriate will help to reduce the risk of introducing or spreading INNS and ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as well as contributing towards achieving the targets for Descriptor 2 of the UK Marine Strategy and to ecosystem resilience. The nature of biosecurity measures required will depend on the risk, scale, nature and location of the proposal. Developers are encouraged to engage early with NRW to discuss what assessment and biosecurity measures may be required, if any.

Marine litter

187. Marine litter is defined as any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of, abandoned or lost in the marine and coastal environment.

188. Descriptor 10 of the UK Marine Strategy covers the monitoring of and measures in place to reduce the introduction of litter into the marine environment. Marine litter is a global environmental, economic, human health and aesthetic problem. It poses a threat to habitats, species and ecosystems through direct damage to wildlife from entanglement, entrapment, smothering and ingestion. It has potentially significant economic impacts on tourism, where unsightly coastal areas are less attractive to visitors, and can result in clean-up costs and costs to fishermen through lost catch and snagged nets. It can also pose a hazard to seafarers through fouling of propellers. The presence of medical and sanitary waste and broken glass constitute a potential risk to human health. There are also potential detrimental health effects due to the presence of plastic particles within marine organisms which ultimately end up in the food chain.

189. Marine litter is a transboundary problem and all countries and communities have a role to play in tackling it. Avoiding littering and inappropriate disposal of waste is the best way to reduce the amount of litter entering the marine environment. In line with our ambition for a "circular economy" reducing packaging, increasing recycling and reducing the use of single-use plastic products will also help minimise marine litter.

Policy

ENV_04: Marine litter

Proposals should demonstrate how they:

- **avoid the deliberate introduction of litter into the marine plan area; and**
- **minimise the risk of accidental release of litter.**

Policy Aim

190. **Policy ENV_04** recognises that the deliberate introduction of litter is a criminal offence under national and international legislation including the Environmental Protection Act and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). The materials that can be disposed of at sea are strictly regulated. Proposals should ensure that they are compliant with these regulations. Where appropriate, proposals should also take measures to reduce the risk of accidental release of litter and to demonstrate an effective plan for its removal.

191. This policy aims to contribute towards achieving the targets for reducing marine litter under Descriptor 10 of the UK Marine Strategy. It also aims to contribute towards the wider achievement of ecosystem resilience and to safeguard the coastal and marine environment from harm resulting from the release of marine litter.

Introduction of energy, including underwater noise

192. The introduction of energy into the marine environment can change the nature of physical systems and have a negative effect on ecosystems. Energy can be in the form of light, electricity, heat, noise, electromagnetic radiation, radio waves or vibrations. Human activities can take energy out of a system or add to it. Descriptor 11 of the UK Marine Strategy addresses the introduction of energy and at present focusses on underwater noise. It requires that noise introduced into the marine environment does not have an adverse effect. In particular, it requires that human activities potentially introducing such impulsive sounds into the marine environment are managed to the extent that no significant long-term adverse effects are incurred at the population level or specifically to vulnerable/threatened species and key functional groups.

193. Noise resulting from a proposed activity or development in the marine and coastal environment can have adverse effects on marine mammals, birds and fish. It has the potential to interfere with communication and behaviour, affect hearing organs, and injure or even kill marine life. Sources of concern include: explosions; shipping; seismic surveys; offshore construction and offshore industrial activities e.g. dredging, drilling and piling; sonar of various types, and acoustic deterrent devices. Noise can also have a negative effect on people by impacting health and use and enjoyment of the marine environment.

Policy

ENV_05: Underwater noise

Proposals should demonstrate that they have considered man-made noise impacts on the marine environment and, in order of preference:

a. avoid adverse impacts; and/or

b. minimise impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or

c. mitigate impacts where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Policy Aim

194. At present, we have a limited understanding of the levels, distribution and impacts of underwater noise. We therefore aim to manage noise impacts using best available evidence and to monitor and collect evidence to improve our understanding. Marine plan authorities will take a strategic overview of man-made noise sources and assess the potential cumulative effects of noise and vibration across sensitive receptors in the marine area.

195. Under **Policy ENV_05**, human activities potentially introducing impulsive sounds should be managed to eliminate, minimise or mitigate significant adverse effects on vulnerable species and populations. If significant adverse impacts cannot be adequately addressed, proposals must be able to present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

196. Proposals should include a noise impact assessment when required by a public authority. Developers and plan users should also consider whether the level of surface or underwater noise has the potential to affect any European Protected Species (EPS) and whether an EPS Licence may be required to reflect disturbance and injury impacts.

197. Public authorities should ensure that, where appropriate, the consenting process requires developers to record impulsive noise-generating activities within the Marine Noise Registry in compliance with the UK Programme of Measures and Monitoring Programme in relation to Descriptor 11 of the UK Marine Strategy. Where submissions are not a condition of a consent, developers are encouraged to voluntarily submit information to the noise registry.

Air and water quality

198. Air and water quality is central to the resilience of marine ecosystems and our well-being. As recognised by the MPS, development and use of the marine plan area has the potential to influence air and water quality[27]. Water quality in particular is covered by Descriptors 5, 7 and 8 of the UK Marine Strategy.

Air:

199. Sources of air pollution include emissions, including particulate matter and gases, from shipping and fishing vessels and dust from construction activities. Air pollution can have an adverse effect on people's well-being and on biodiversity and can also contribute to climate change.

200. The UK Air Quality Strategy[28] sets out and regulates UK wide objectives and policy options for improving air quality that will bring health and social benefits.

201. The control of nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions from ships through the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships) Regulations 2008 (as amended) is primarily designed to improve air quality by requiring engines installed on a ship to meet the specified NOx emission standard. This measure will also contribute to the reduction of NOx inputs to, and human-induced eutrophication of, marine waters under Descriptor 5 of the UK Marine Strategy.

27 MPS chapter 2, Sections 2.6.2 and 2.6.4.

28 **www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69336/pb12654-air-quality-strategy-vol1-070712.pdf.**

Water:

202. Undesirable changes in water quality can have a negative effect on the benefits that we receive from our marine ecosystems including opportunities for recreation, tourism and fisheries.

203. The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003 and the UK Marine Strategy provide the over-arching framework for the management of water quality in our coastal and marine waters. In coastal waters, the UK Marine Strategy only applies to those aspects of GES which are not already covered by the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003.

204. River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) are the mechanism by which the The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003 are implemented. They provide a framework for managing all aspects of the water environment in river basins and the coastal environment, including bathing waters and shellfish waters, areas designated as eutrophic and European sites. Compliance with the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003 is important in managing pressures and maintaining and improving water quality.

Policy

ENV_06: Air and water quality

Proposals should demonstrate that they have considered their potential air and water quality impacts and should, in order of preference:

a. avoid adverse impacts; and/or

b. minimise adverse impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or

c. mitigate adverse impacts where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

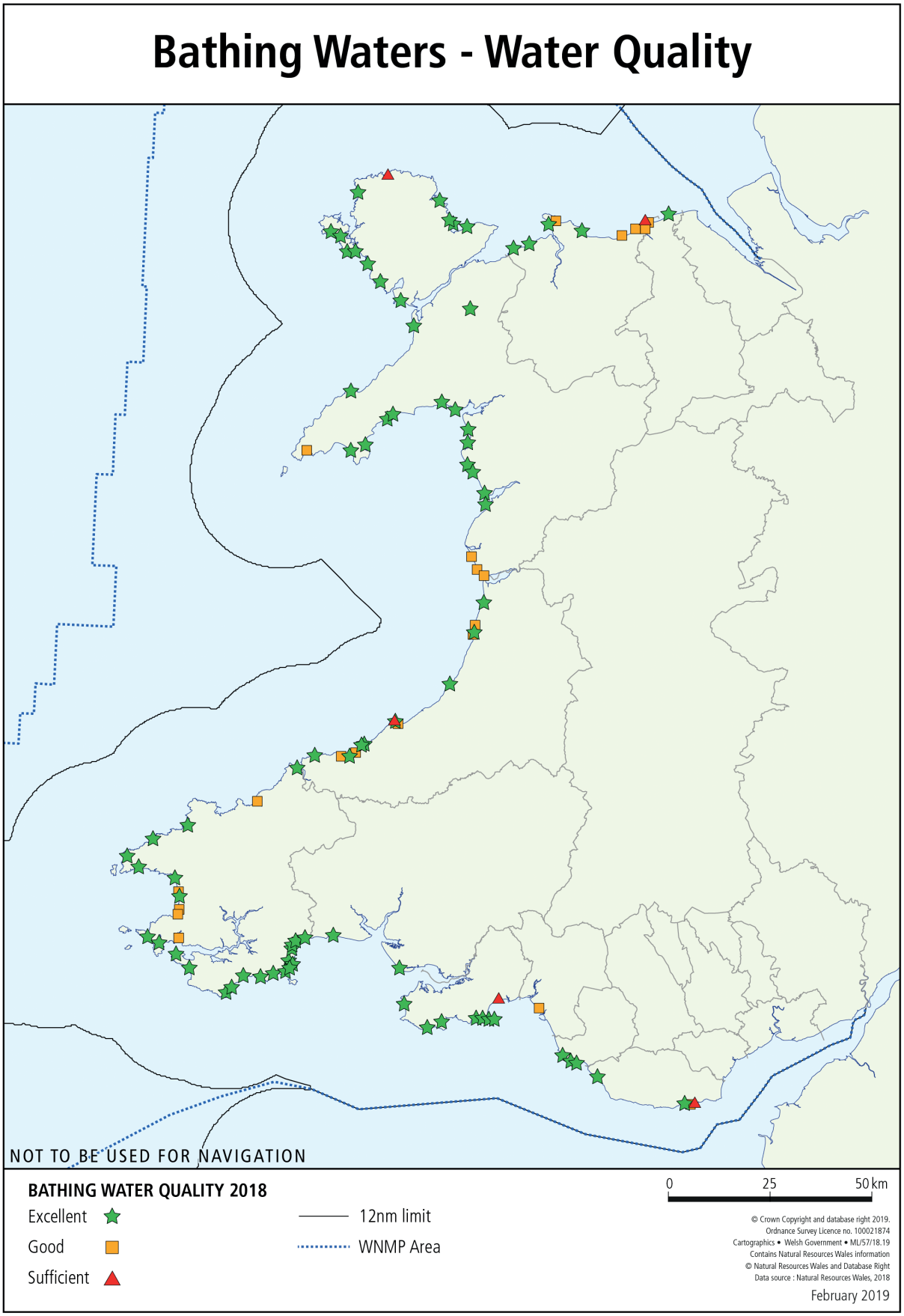
Policy Aim

205. **Policy ENV_06** seeks to ensure compliance with Air Quality Standards and assessment of pollutants under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. It also seeks to ensure compliance with objectives under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003 as well as other national and international environmental legislation and commitments. This policy recognises that adverse impacts on air or water quality can have knock on impacts on health and well-being and other interests such as tourism and recreation.

206. Under **Policy ENV_06**, proposals should demonstrate how they will avoid, minimise or mitigate undesirable changes to air and water quality. If significant adverse impacts cannot be adequately addressed, proposals must be able to present a clear and convincing case for proceeding. Proposals that will result in improvements to air or water quality are encouraged.

207. Where an activity may impact on compliance with the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003 by causing deterioration in status or by preventing a water body achieving its objectives, a Water Framework Directive Compliance Assessment should be carried out. Where development and use of the marine environment may result in increased emissions to air, including particulate matter and gases, proposals should demonstrate that air quality impacts and limits have been considered. Developers and public authorities should ensure that impacts on air quality have been taken into account and mitigation measures adopted, where appropriate.

Figure 9: Bathing Waters



Fish Species and Habitats

208. Fish are an important natural resource and the status of fish stocks is indicative of a healthy ecosystem as well as being the basis of prosperous and viable commercial and recreational fishing activities.

209. Sustainable fisheries depend upon the availability of a viable fisheries resource that does not threaten the resilience of fish populations over the long term and fishing practices that do not harm the ability of fish populations to reproduce and stocks to respond to and recover from pressures (i.e. using natural resources in a way and at a rate that maintains and enhances marine ecosystem resilience). Commitment to sustainable use of natural resources and to safeguarding populations of commercially exploited fish and shellfish also aligns with the goals and targets for Descriptors 1 and 3 of the UK Marine Strategy.

Policy

ENV_07: Fish Species and Habitats

Proposals potentially affecting important feeding, breeding (including spawning & nursery) and migration areas or habitats for key fish and shellfish species of commercial or ecological importance should demonstrate how they, in order of preference:

a. avoid adverse impacts on those areas; and/or

b. minimise adverse impacts where they cannot be avoided; and/or

c. mitigate adverse impacts where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Policy Aim

210. **Policy ENV_07** recognises that in order to support fisheries activities, fish life-cycles and the ecosystems upon which they depend need to be sustained (see the Fisheries sector policy chapter of this Plan). Certain developments or activities in the marine plan area have the potential to adversely affect feeding, breeding and migration areas and habitats for key commercial or protected species. Important species include those of commercial, conservation, ecological or recreational importance. Important fish stocks are those of commercial or recreational value or those given protection as having wider conservation value under national or international legislation.

211. **Policy ENV_07** aims to ensure appropriate consideration of the potential impacts of proposals on fish stocks, key habitats (including feeding and breeding areas) and migratory routes, contributing towards achieving the goals for Descriptor 3 of the UK Marine Strategy. Proposals should demonstrate how they will avoid, minimise or mitigate significant adverse impacts upon these areas, species and the habitats upon which they depend. Developments or activities should be assessed for potential impacts on the fish species themselves as well as on sensitive ecological receptors. If significant adverse impacts cannot be adequately addressed, proposals must be able to present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

212. This policy contributes to ecosystem resilience by affording due consideration of and protection to areas of ecological importance for a range of fish species, including those of commercial importance and those on which such species are ecologically dependent. Such measures also provide wider benefits for ecological resilience for any coincident species (e.g. benthic organisms, seabirds, marine mammals) supported by these feeding, breeding (including spawning & nursery) and migration areas or habitats.

Figure 10(a): Fish spawning areas

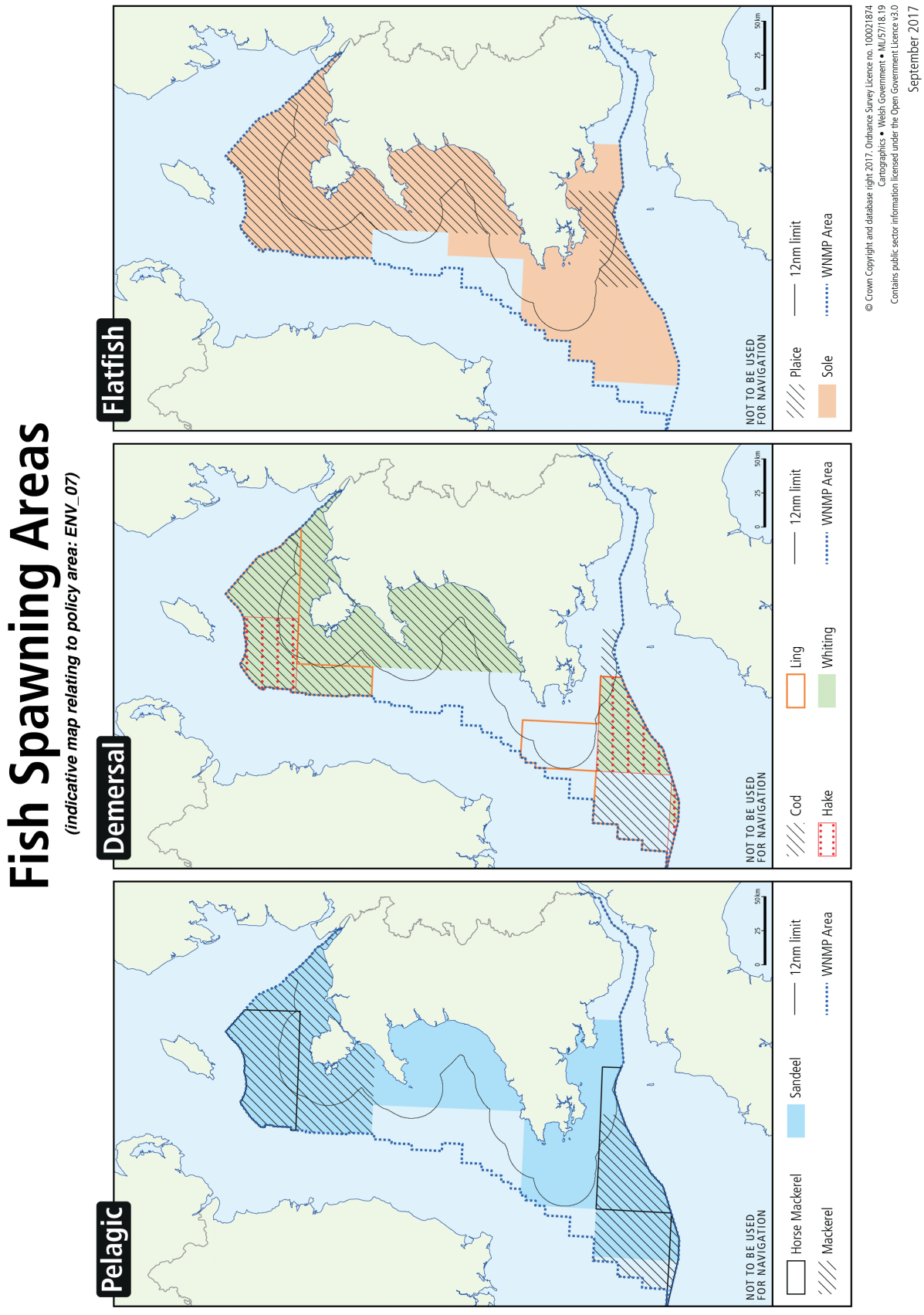
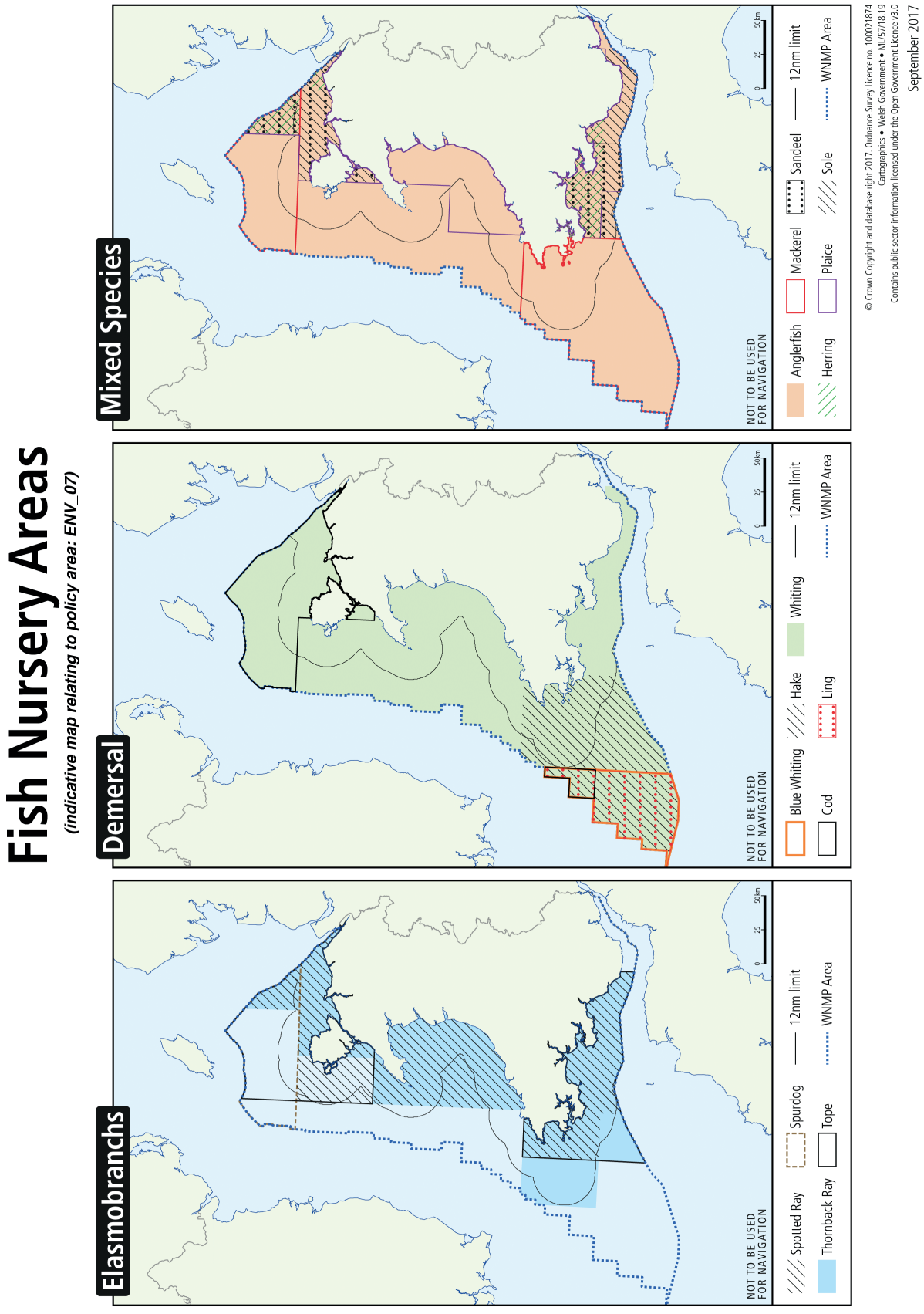


Figure 10(b): Fish nursery areas



GOV General Policy – Promoting Good Governance

Introduction

213. Good governance is about creating and using the correct processes for making and implementing decisions to deliver the best outcomes for society. Good governance for marine planning is important for several reasons. It provides accountability, transparency and participatory decision making, as well as ensuring that decisions are responsive, effective, efficient and consistent with relevant legislation. It not only improves the confidence decision makers and stakeholders have in planning, but importantly it provides an ethical basis for governance.

214. Welsh Government is committed to upholding its values of honesty, integrity, objectivity, impartiality and openness throughout the marine planning process. For example, in developing this Plan we have undertaken considerable engagement with the public and stakeholders. Our vision and objectives set out a clear statement of what this Plan seeks to achieve. We are working with relevant industries and public authorities to ensure their roles and responsibilities are clear and they are supported in fulfilling them during plan implementation. We will use innovative approaches where available and appropriate, such as new technology to better understand and communicate about Wales' marine area. In order to be accountable we will review this Plan regularly and report our findings in line with the requirements of the MCAA.

215. Developers and relevant public authorities should also implement good governance in their activities. This section includes policies relating to the development and assessment of proposals and the means by which decisions are made and implemented.

Cumulative effects

216. Cumulative effects are recognised by the MPS as a consideration in decision making[29]. They are those effects that result from incremental changes caused by two or more past, present and/or reasonably foreseeable actions. These can be economic, social or environmental in nature. Cumulative effects could arise from single or multiple responses (environmental, economic or social) to single or multiple pressures from single or multiple activities. The term "cumulative" is extended to include the term "in combination" effects as used in some legislation.

217. The nature and scale of the effect(s) of a single development could alone have little or no impact. However, they could prove significant if there is interaction between two or more pressures, activities or developments. Given the highly mobile, wide-ranging nature of many marine fish, mammal and seabird species, and the wide geographical area over which certain ecological and physical processes operate, activities and developments located some distance from one another might have the potential to interact. Therefore, consideration may need to be given to any impacts which a proposal may have on neighbouring marine plan areas.

Policy

GOV_01: Cumulative effects

Proposals should demonstrate that they have assessed potential cumulative effects and should, in order of preference:

a. avoid adverse effects; and/or

b. minimise effects where they cannot be avoided; and/or

c. mitigate effects where they cannot be minimised.

If significant adverse effects cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated, proposals must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Proposals that contribute to positive cumulative effects are encouraged.

29 MPS Chapter 2, Sections 2.3.21 and 2.4.3.

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Policy Aim

218. **Policy GOV_01** aims to ensure appropriate consideration of cumulative effects across projects, developments and sectors, contributing to ecosystem resilience and ensuring compliance with UK Marine Strategy and The Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

219. Under this policy, proposals should demonstrate that they have considered any multiple and cumulative effects of proposals including those associated with other (including known, planned) projects and activities. It is not sufficient to consider the effects of individual developments in isolation.

220. The level of assessment undertaken for any project should be proportionate to the expected scale and effect(s) of the project as well as the sensitivity of the economic, social or environmental effect(s) concerned (including across administrative boundaries).

221. This policy recognises that cumulative effects can result in positive gain not just negative impacts. Where proposals will result in positive cumulative effects, in line with the policies of this Plan, they will be supported.

Cross-border collaboration

222. Both land-based and sea-based activities can have a direct impact over wide areas which may cover the jurisdiction of multiple planning authorities (both terrestrial and marine). Integration of planning across these borders and at local, national and regional scales is therefore important, as well as integration with other organisations and processes involved in the regulation and management of natural resources and space. This includes:

- between marine and terrestrial areas;
- between marine areas in Wales;
- between marine areas within the UK; and
- between UK marine areas and those of neighbouring countries.

Policy

GOV_02: Cross-border and plan compatibility

Relevant public authorities, in making their decisions, should have regard to:

- **any applicable policy in a relevant marine plan;**
- **any applicable policy in relevant terrestrial development plans or related documents;**
- **the Natural Resources Policy;**
- **any relevant local well-being plan(s) (including the local well-being assessment); and**
- **evidence in any relevant Area Statement(s) produced by Natural Resources Wales (NRW).**

Policy Aim

223. **Policy GOV_02** sets out key documents which should be considered in the development of and decision-making on proposals in order to ensure adequate integration with other planning regimes. It seeks to ensure that development decisions contribute to the sustainable use of Welsh seas while optimising benefits and minimising adverse impacts on activities and interests in neighbouring jurisdictions. This policy is set in the context of the requirements for cross-border working set out in the MPS.

224. Authorisation decisions should be made by relevant public authorities in accordance with this Plan, after appropriate liaison with any other relevant decision making authorities and in consultation with statutory advisors and other bodies, as appropriate. The potential positive and negative effects of development proposals on both the marine and terrestrial environments, and both within Wales and further afield, should be assessed in a collective and cumulative manner (see **Policy GOV_01**).

225. Proposals should provide evidence that integration across the different administrations has been considered and that proposals are compatible with all relevant planning documents and processes. This is particularly important with respect to trans-boundary applications where proposals should demonstrate that they are in accordance with all relevant plans against which they should be considered. Proposals should also consider opportunities to contribute to the sustainable development and objectives of neighbouring marine plan areas through cross-border working.

226. It is the responsibility of the public authority receiving the application to notify relevant public authorities of any neighbouring administration that it considers to be affected by a proposal. Developers are, however, encouraged to notify all relevant public authorities (including in any neighbouring administration) prior to submitting an application.

SCI General Policy – Using Sound Science Responsibly

Introduction

227. Evidence is information used to support decisions. It covers a range of disciplines including economics, social research, operational research, statistics, natural science, engineering and geography. It includes research and development, monitoring and surveillance, and secondary analysis and synthesis.

228. There are a number of tools used to collect, analyse and share marine data and evidence, including long-term monitoring programme databases and agreements on marine data standards. Information on Welsh seas, including their resources and the use that is made of them, is available in the Wales Marine Evidence Report and the marine planning portal. SoNaRR[30] also contains relevant evidence that can inform decision making.

229. Evidence helps us to understand the distribution and status of our marine natural resources, the use that people make of them, the impacts of that use and the opportunities for potential future use. Effective decisions are those that are supported by sound evidence applied in a consistent, robust, and proportionate manner in which precaution and pragmatism is used appropriately[31]. All stakeholders with an interest in the marine environment have a role to play in ensuring that evidence is used consistently and responsibly and that strategic evidence needs, including those identified in the Welsh Government's Marine Evidence Strategy, are addressed.

230. In some instances, insufficient or only limited evidence may be available to inform a decision. In such cases, management decisions should still be taken but should be done in such a way to deal with any residual uncertainty and minimise the risk of significant adverse impacts on the economy, society, the environment and existing and future potential uses of the marine environment. Careful presentation of evidence enables the uncertainties and levels of confidence associated with it to be recognised so that evidence gaps or other limitations can be taken into account and risk-based decisions can be made.

Policy

SCI_01: Risk-based decision making

Relevant public authorities should make decisions using sound evidence and a risk-based, proportionate approach. Where appropriate they should apply the precautionary principle and consider opportunities to apply adaptive management.

Policy Aim

231. **Policy SCI_01** aims to support plan led sustainable development of the marine area (in line with the WFGA and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016) through proportionate and risk-based decision making. This policy frames and guides all decisions to ensure a resilient marine economy, society and environment.

232. Policy and management decisions should be underpinned by sound evidence. Developers, regulators and other users of the marine environment should make use of the best available evidence in developing their proposals and making decisions. They should equally support others to do so by sharing evidence wherever possible.

233. New evidence may be needed to support a decision where there are uncertainties about the potential effects of a proposal. A risk-based, proportionate approach should be taken to identifying essential evidence needs to allow determination of an application. Such an approach ensures that identified evidence needs are proportionate to the risk posed by the project or proposal, whilst appropriate and sufficient for decision-making.

30 **www.naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/the-state-of-natural-resources-report-assessment-of-the-sustainable-management-of-natural-resources/?lang=en.**

31 This principle is reflected in the MPS Chapter 2, Section 2.3.

Image supplied by School of Ocean Sciences, Bangor University

234. Opportunities should be taken to identify and address strategic evidence needs in line with this Plan's priorities to help de-risk future investment and consenting decisions. Reasonable steps should be taken to fill strategic evidence gaps to underpin decision making by planning authorities, regulators and sea users.

235. Decisions should apply an appropriate level of precaution which should be proportionate to the environmental, or other, risk posed by the proposal. This requires the identification of potentially adverse effects and an evaluation of the sufficiency of the evidence base (including residual scientific uncertainty).

236. The precautionary principle should be applied where there are reasonable grounds for concern that human activities may bring about hazards to human health, harm living resources and marine ecosystems, damage amenities or interfere with other legitimate uses of the sea, even when there is no conclusive evidence of a causal relationship. Reliance on precaution should be minimised by making best use of evidence. A high level of precaution may nevertheless be appropriate in certain instances, e.g. in relation to particularly sensitive or vulnerable habitats and species for which strict protection may be provided by law.

237. Adaptive management is a process which allows for the management of uncertainty to be optimised and reduced over time and is a key principle of SMNR under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. It helps manage risk within acceptable limits. It entails monitoring, reviewing and feeding back into ongoing management decisions. This approach should be considered where there is uncertainty in relation to a proposal but there is opportunity to manage this by ensuring appropriate feedback into management responses for further decisions. Adaptive management is not intended to circumvent the need to properly consider issues that can reasonably be addressed.

238. One form of adaptive management involves planning activities in a structured way to enable learning by doing within the scope of the proposal, for example through a phased approach. This approach may be appropriate where there is insufficient evidence to determine the likely impact of new activities and technologies, but the best available evidence or expert advice suggests that the potential impact is manageable as part of a carefully designed adaptive process.

239. An adaptive approach can facilitate the use of the marine area by consenting novel activities on a smaller scale initially, to enable their careful assessment prior to more widespread introduction. Consenting decisions may include appropriate monitoring and feedback mechanisms to prevent or address unacceptable impacts should they arise and to improve the evidence base, allowing uncertainty to be reduced over time. Alternatively, decisions may allow a phased approach to deployment where monitoring conditions can allow the phased expansion of a project as knowledge develops through targeted monitoring.

240. Decisions on the use of the marine environment are made based upon predicted effects. Relevant public authorities should ensure that appropriate, enforceable licence conditions are included in authorisations to ensure adequate assurance can be provided that actual effects are understood. Requirements to undertake post-consent monitoring and reporting should be proportionate and clearly related to the key potential issues identified during authorisation.

241. Established activities (both consented and those not requiring a consent e.g. tourism and recreation) are important uses of the Plan area which are afforded safeguarding as part of this Plan. A wide range of activities already occur in our seas and there is the potential for these to continue, grow and diversify in addition to new activities occurring.

Safeguarding Policy

DEF_01: Defence (safeguarding)

Proposals that:

- **potentially affect Ministry of Defence (MOD) Danger Areas, Exercise Areas or strategic defence interests; and/or**
- **potentially interfere with communication, surveillance and navigation facilities necessary for defence and national security;**

should only be authorised with the agreement of MOD.

SAF_01: Safeguarding existing activity

a. Proposals likely to have significant adverse impacts upon an established activity covered by a formal application or authorisation must demonstrate how they will address compatibility issues with that activity.

Proposals unable to demonstrate adequate compatibility must present a clear and convincing case for the proposal to progress under exceptional circumstances.

b. Proposals likely to have significant adverse impacts upon an established activity not subject to a formal authorisation must demonstrate how they will address compatibility issues with that activity.

Proposals unable to demonstrate adequate compatibility must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Under SAF 01 a and b, compatibility should be demonstrated through, in order of preference:

- **Avoiding significant adverse impacts on those activities, and/or**
- **Minimising significant adverse impacts where these cannot be avoided; and/or**
- **Mitigating significant adverse impacts where they cannot be minimised**

SAF_02: Safeguarding strategic resources

Proposals which may have significant adverse impacts upon the prospects of any sector covered by this plan to engage in sustainable future strategic resource use (of resources identified by an SRA) must demonstrate how they will address compatibility issues with that potential resource use.

Proposals unable to demonstrate adequate compatibility must present a clear and convincing case for proceeding.

Compatibility should be demonstrated through, in order of preference:

- **Avoiding significant adverse impacts on this potential strategic resource use, and/or**
- **Minimising significant adverse impacts where these cannot be avoided; and/or**
- **Mitigating significant adverse impacts where they cannot be minimised**

Safeguarding Policy Aim

242. This Plan aims to support the sustainable development of the Welsh marine area, taking account of the cumulative effects of all uses on the marine environment, promoting the co-existence of compatible activities and supporting the avoidance or mitigation of conflicts between users wherever possible. In setting out a policy framework to achieve these aims, this Plan recognises that activities at sea derive benefit from the sustainable use of marine natural resources and that current and future activities are dependent upon the availability of these resources in order to thrive. This Plan therefore establishes Safeguarding Policies to protect, to an appropriate degree, current and future potential activity. It provides specific Safeguarding Policy (**Policy DEF_01**) in relation to safeguarding Defence interests and common Safeguarding Policies (**SAF_01 and SAF_02**) which apply in relation to safeguarding all sectors other than Defence.

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243. Safeguarding planning policy is a means to formalise common practice in decision making, ensuring all appropriate considerations are taken into account in any determination in a structured way. This includes consideration of a proposal's potential effects on current activities and potential adverse impact on other sectors reliant upon a particular resource. This Plan's Safeguarding Policies aim to ensure development is sustainable, promote compatibility and prevent unacceptable adverse impacts on other users and uses of the marine environment.

244. **Policy DEF_01** is specifically aimed at protecting MOD activities from interference by other uses and users of the marine environment, as well as safeguarding users from dangers associated with MOD activities. This policy recognises that the extensive areas occupied by defence activities in Welsh waters result in the defence sector potentially interacting with a number of other marine users. **Policy DEF_01** therefore aims to ensure that new proposals from all sectors consider their potential individual and cumulative impacts on both marine and land-based MOD activity and avoid or minimise interference. Under this policy, planning permission, a marine licence or other consent will only be granted where the MOD is satisfied the proposal will not cause unacceptable risk to defence and national security. Where possible, mitigation measures should be sought to overcome any identified adverse effects so that compatibility can be achieved and the development can proceed.

245. **Policy SAF_01** applies to the safeguarding of all sectors other than Defence and aims to safeguard existing activity and resource use.

246. Consented activities, and activities requiring consent for which a formal application has been submitted, can be identified spatially on maps as discrete areas. **Policy SAF_01 a** applies to these types of established activities. This policy recognises the investment made by a developer in seeking or gaining a consent and that developer's legitimate expectation to be able to continue, within reason, to operate. A relatively high weighting of safeguarding therefore applies.

247. Existing activities not requiring formal consent require a different approach. These activities are typically diverse and spatially widespread (e.g. fishing or tourism and recreation). Nevertheless, it is important that established use is carefully considered in decision making and that any needless sterilisation of the resource upon which such activities depend, or any needless displacement of the activity itself, is avoided. Established activities not requiring formal consent can also be identified on maps (albeit with a lower level of confidence and in a different way e.g. 'heat' maps). **Policy SAF_01 b** applies in such circumstances.

248. Safeguarding **Policy SAF_01** ensures that existing activities are clearly and systematically taken into account, at an early stage, by any new proposal which has the potential to adversely impact upon them (an approach largely consistent with current regulatory practice). In some cases, this policy recognises that adverse impact upon established use may be unavoidable. In such a scenario, this policy establishes a hierarchy requiring developers to avoid, minimise or mitigate such impacts or, if this is not possible, to make a clear and convincing case to justify proceeding, in order to ensure an appropriate response by decision makers.

249. Safeguarding space for future potential use is also a consideration for planning although this involves greater uncertainty with regards to resource distribution and constraints related to resource use, coupled with variable information on sector needs and/or intent. Consequently, a lower weight of safeguarding is appropriate.

250. Safeguarding future potential use is a resource-focussed exercise enabled by the spatial identification and the mapping of the relevant natural resources. This type of safeguarding will be dependent upon the nature of the identified resource and the nature of the sector and will be delivered through the identification of SRAs for specific sectors (see section on Strategic Resource Areas). **Policy SAF_02** applies to these areas of potential future use; this policy will apply to an SRA from the point at which it is introduced through the publication of a MPN.

251. Safeguarding Policies are supported by Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narratives in each Sector Chapter, setting out the application of Safeguarding Policy in relation to that sector. In preparing and taking decisions upon proposals, developers and decision makers should apply this Plan's Safeguarding Policies in relation to **all** sectors covered by the Plan.

252. Safeguarding Policies are supported by one or more maps to spatially define sector policies or for illustrative purposes. Sector maps in this Plan are indicative and their content liable to change. Decisions should be taken in line with best available evidence and relevant considerations; developers and decision makers should refer to current sector maps shown on the marine planning portal **http://lle.gov.wales/apps/marineportal/**.

Sector Policy – Aggregates

253. Aggregates sector policy applies to both the inshore and offshore regions of the Plan area.

Aggregates

Sector Objective

> To continue to use marine aggregates resources at a rate and in locations which best meet our current and future needs by ensuring adequate reserves are provided for through long-term licences.

Sector Objective – Context and Rationale

254. In this Plan, the Aggregates sector involves the sea-bed extraction of aggregates (such as sands and gravels) for use as construction material, for land reclamation or beach replenishment (recharge/nourishment). It does not cover the removal of aggregates as the by-product of another activity (e.g. during project construction), its removal for a particular special purpose outside of a licensed area (e.g. wind-blown sand) or navigation related dredging.

255. Marine aggregates resources are widely distributed throughout Welsh waters; however, the majority of extraction has historically taken place in the Bristol Channel, Severn Estuary and off North Wales. Marine aggregates play a strategically important role in the national and local supply of aggregates, predominantly for use in construction projects. The sector therefore makes a critical contribution to the Welsh economy, providing both direct employment and secondary employment in supporting activities including ship building and repair, processing of aggregates at wharves and transportation and manufacture of products such as ready-mixed concrete and concrete products, asphalt and mortar from marine aggregates.

256. Marine aggregates are a finite marine natural resource and their extraction and rate of use need to be sustainably managed. However, this Plan recognises that an adequate and continuing supply of aggregates is essential to meet demand for construction needs for the built environment. In many cases, marine aggregates offer an appropriate and viable source, as reflected by the Regional Aggregates Working Parties' Regional Technical Statement (RTS)[32]. Whilst extraction may cause a range of environmental impacts, overall marine dredging can have distinct economic and environmental advantages in comparison with land-based quarrying.

257. The MPS recognises that marine aggregates contribute to energy security and economic development through provision of fill for major coastal infrastructure projects, for example ports or renewable energy projects.[33] While other alternative sources of supply of suitable fine aggregates should be investigated, and recyclates will continue to be used, reliance on the use of marine aggregates in Wales for construction and (according to demand) capital projects and beach nourishment will continue for the foreseeable future and for the lifetime of this Plan.

258. Demand for marine aggregates materials is closely linked to the construction sector and the wider economy. It is likely to be influenced significantly by large scale infrastructure projects, the need for soft engineering defences (such as beach replenishment), and for coastal flood and erosion defence, demand for which may increase as a result of climate change.

32 **www.grhgca-cymru.org.uk/html/publications.html** and **www.swrawp-wales.org.uk/Html/publications.html**.

33 MPS Chapter 3, Section 3.5.1.

Image courtesy of the British Marine Aggregate Producers Association

259. The availability of resources, proximity to markets and presence of infrastructure suggests that marine sand resources in the Bristol Channel, Severn Estuary and off North Wales are likely to provide for a good level of supply of marine aggregates to meet anticipated demand over the term of the Plan. However, extraction of aggregates resource from the Severn Estuary is understood to be particularly environmentally sensitive and will progress under specific controls including a tonnage limit. Areas of potentially viable aggregates resource have also been identified off West Wales, and particularly off North Wales. It is estimated that these latter areas could provide a supply for at least another 50 years, although there is currently limited market for this resource.

260. The Welsh Government Interim Marine Aggregates Dredging Policy (iMADP) was published in 2004 as a basis for determining licence applications in the Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary region in the absence, at that time, of a statutory licensing regime. iMADP has been reviewed alongside the development of this Plan to reflect the additional controls introduced under a marine licence and application process. This Plan provides strategic marine planning policy for management of aggregates resources throughout Welsh waters; iMADP is withdrawn as policy at the time of adoption of this Plan but its content will continue to act as a point of reference to inform decision making. This approach reflects the basis of this Plan's policies being partially derived from the iMADP's evidence base and policy approaches.

Sector Supporting Policy

AGG_01: Aggregates (supporting)

AGG_01 a: Proposals for new aggregate extraction will be supported, within any tonnage limits, where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

AGG_01 b: Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities:

- **for the sustainable use of wider marine aggregate natural resources;**
- **to define and, once in place, further develop and refine Strategic Resource Areas for aggregates;**

in order to support the sustainable development of the aggregate sector through marine planning.

Sector Supporting Policy Aim

261. The narrative underpinning the **Aggregates Sector Objective** sets out the Welsh Government's conclusion that, while alternative sources of aggregates (including recyclates) should be investigated and encouraged, ensuring a continuing, sustainable supply of suitable marine aggregates resource remains essential to meeting the construction needs for the build environment over the lifetime of this Plan.

262. Under **Policy AGG_01 a**, relevant public authorities should support the extraction of marine aggregates resource where this is consistent with relevant General Policies and the Safeguarding Policies of this Plan. At the same time, it should be recognised that marine aggregates are a finite marine natural resource and, like other natural resources, extraction (and rate of use) needs to be sustainably managed.

263. The Welsh Government, the Crown Estate (TCE), industry and NRW should collaborate to ensure that licensed marine aggregates reserves are maintained at adequate levels in order to help meet the variable demands of changing markets and with the flexibility and capacity to meet the needs of less predictable capital projects and beach replenishment schemes. The Welsh Government will seek to ensure licensed marine aggregates reserves for routine construction uses of at least ten to fifteen years. This may be achieved on a regional basis.

264. Industry is encouraged to take opportunities to utilise resources away from more sensitive locations and further offshore (wherever possible) whilst being mindful of the need to ensure continuity of supply in order to meet demand. It is anticipated that the use of offshore aggregates resources could support larger extraction licences with longer-term duration, which will be particularly important in the supply of aggregates for major infrastructure projects.

265. Whilst offshore resources of aggregates should be used wherever possible, sources relatively close to demand will continue to be used where appropriate to do so. Aggregates are a bulk commodity where transportation costs, project viability and associated carbon emissions drive the need for collection close to destination of use. A balance should therefore be struck between support for using aggregates resources from further offshore against practical constraints associated with extraction and transport.

266. This Plan also recognises that shipping plays an essential role in the transportation of aggregates material to ports and harbours, where it is landed and stored for onward transportation to destination of use. Relevant planning and port authorities should therefore take account of the needs of the aggregates industry and ensure adequate provision for appropriate facilities and associated infrastructure as close to areas of demand as practicable.

267. **Policy AGG_01 a** allows for tonnage limits to be defined for an area, where appropriate, thereby ensuring the long-term supply of aggregates resource without compromising ecosystem resilience. Tonnage limits may be subject to an assessed, justified and minimal roll-over provision.

268. Any tonnage limit may be established or reviewed at any time through inclusion in this Plan or through issue of a Cabinet Statement (and subsequent inclusion in any amendment of this Plan). In all cases, setting or amending tonnage limits should involve full engagement and consultation with interested parties before any statement is made. Any Cabinet Statement will be a relevant consideration in decision making.

269. Subject to sustainability criteria, and the undertaking of necessary assessment through the decision-making processes, this Plan defines that a tonnage limit of not more than 800,000 tonnes (exclusive of licensed roll-over tonnage) of annual licensed aggregates will be allowed from Welsh waters in the Severn Estuary that lie to the east of a line drawn south-eastwards of Lavenock point (Figure 11). To ensure an adaptive approach to management of the resource and delivery of sustainable development this limit may be reviewed from time to time and may be updated through a Cabinet Statement.

270. Applications for new licence areas or increases in tonnage for existing areas will need to clearly demonstrate the need for the additional licensed resources, taking into account the need to ensure competition is maintained in the market place.

271. Where relevant, marine licences should include monitoring requirements to ensure that relevant ecosystem effects predicted as part of a proposal are properly understood and that this feeds back into management decisions. Applications should generally be considered for a licence term of up to fifteen years with five yearly substantive reviews of monitoring results. However, for applications in new areas or sensitive areas a shorter licence term, for example five years, should be considered unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise. A precautionary approach should be applied that requires sufficient information and evidence to support and inform decision making for proposals, including consideration of any roll-over provision.

272. **Policy AGG_01 b** recognises existing good practice whereby industry and public authorities have worked collaboratively to develop strategies, protocols and good practice guidance relating to issues such as environmental assessments, biosecurity, seabed monitoring and marine archaeological reporting. This policy encourages the continuation of this collaborative approach and encourages developers and public authorities to collaborate with other relevant organisations, such as research institutes and industry bodies, to develop and participate in opportunities to address key evidence gaps and to better understand opportunities for the sustainable development of the sector, including the identification and refinement of SRAs.

273. In preparing Aggregates related proposals, developers should apply this Plan's General Polices and the Safeguarding Policies in relation to all sectors covered by the Plan. Developers should refer to each sector chapter for further information on the Safeguarding Policy in relation to the safeguarding of the interests of that sector.

Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim

274. The following Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narrative sets the safeguarding policies and policy principles to be applied by all new proposals from all sectors when considering their potential impact upon the Aggregates sector. Developers and decision makers should also apply the safeguarding policy requirements for all other sectors covered by this Plan, as set by the Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narratives of each sector chapter within the Plan.

275. Marine aggregates extraction can only take place where commercially viable deposits of sand and gravel occur i.e. in spatially discrete areas formed long ago by geological processes. It is therefore important that these resources are appropriately safeguarded against other marine activities which may compromise their future use. This Plan's Safeguarding Policies ensure appropriate consideration of the extent of impacts on existing and future aggregates extraction (i.e. to prevent sterilisation or resource contamination).

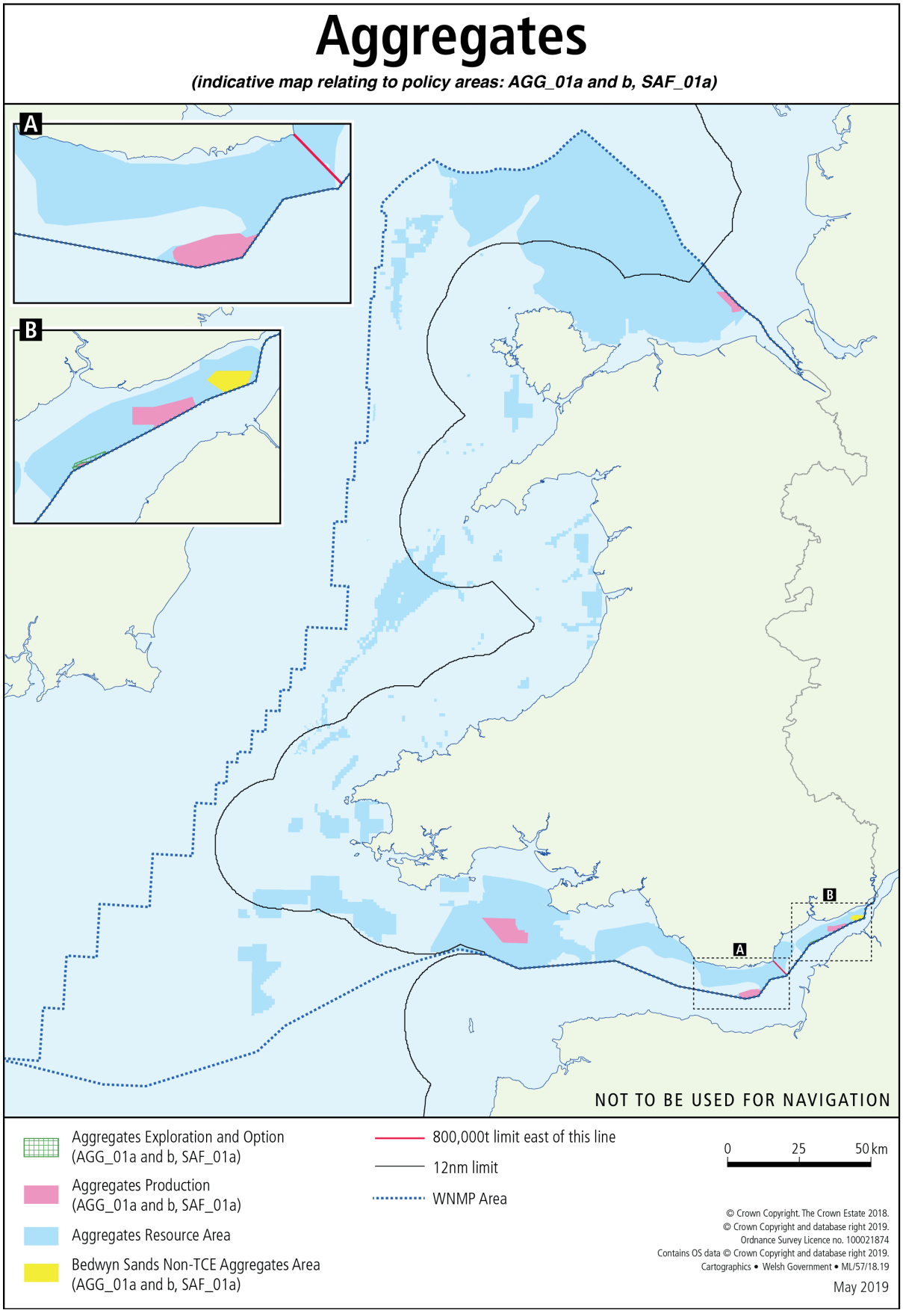
276. All proposals (including new Aggregates sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon existing, planned, or, from the point at which an SRA is introduced, future potential aggregates activities in Aggregates SRAs, should apply this Plan's Safeguarding Policies.

277. **Policy SAF_01 a** applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new Aggregates sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon areas where a marine licence and production agreement for aggregates extraction has been granted or formally applied for, as well as areas where an exploration or option agreement has been offered or is in place for aggregates extraction. It reflects the investment and associated confidence/commitment an operator requires in order to invest further in their asset. **Policy SAF_01 a** includes any agreement between TCE and dredging companies that gives exclusive rights for sand and/or gravel extraction for a defined term.

278. **Policy SAF_02** applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new Aggregates sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon areas identified as SRAs for the Aggregates sector. Aggregates SRAs will identify areas of potential future importance for aggregates extraction, reflecting the likely availability of suitable marine aggregates resources with the potential to support strategic use. SRAs are likely to be located close to supporting infrastructure within which licensed and exploration/option areas already sit. This policy will apply to an SRA from the point at which that SRA is introduced through the publication of a MPN.

279. **Policies SAF_01 a** and **SAF_02** are the means by which Aggregates sector activity is safeguarded. Therefore, **Policies SAF_01 b** and **DEF_01** are not applicable in relation to the safeguarding of Aggregates sector activity.

Figure 11: Aggregates: Indicative map relating to Policy areas



280. Aquaculture sector policy applies to both the inshore and offshore regions of the Plan area.

Aquaculture

Sector Objective

> To facilitate the development of sustainable aquaculture in Welsh waters, including promoting innovative finfish, shellfish and marine algal businesses and associated supply chains.

Sector Objective – Context and Rationale

281. Aquaculture is the rearing or cultivation of aquatic organisms (finfish, shellfish and algae, including support feeds). It includes producing livestock for direct commercial purposes or for restocking and enhancing wild populations ("ocean ranching").

282. This Plan reflects the Welsh Government's aim to support the development of sustainable shellfish, finfish and marine algal aquaculture production and associated supply chains. As recognised by the MPS[34] aquaculture can help to underpin sustainable economic development in rural and coastal communities as well as contribute to the security of food supply. Pressures on some commercial fish stocks and the potential for aquaculture to play a role in supporting restocking programmes underscore the benefits of sustainably developing aquaculture production.

283. Commercial aquaculture in Wales has traditionally focused on the managed cultivation of shellfish, principally blue mussels. The production of farmed finfish in Wales is currently limited and is confined to on-shore facilities.

284. For species already cultivated, this Plan identifies potential for the future development of additional production capacity and options for value added processing. Oysters, scallops, clams and abalone are identified as examples of potential new species for cultivation, along with consideration of potential for sustainable finfish and marine algal aquaculture production.

285. Research commissioned by Welsh Government suggests there is considerable marine space offering potential for the development of aquaculture[35], in particular in relation to shellfish. While potential near-shore areas are limited compared to offshore areas, further viability assessment work is needed to support the identification of specific opportunities and constraints.

286. There is also some potential to develop large-scale sea-cage installations. Similarly, the potential exists to grow algae offshore in sufficient volumes to meet the economies of scale to supply biomass to generate renewable energy. Opportunities also exist at smaller scale to grow algae closer inshore e.g. to supply pharmaceutical or food-related industries. Supply of bespoke products to the pharmaceuticals industry represents a development opportunity of currently unknown scale or potential that should be explored.

34 MPS Chapter 3, Section 3.9.

35 **www.gov.wales/assessment-potential-aquaculture**.

Image supplied by: Seafish

287. Meeting the sector objective requires developing further clarity of the types of aquaculture most likely to contribute to sustainable future development ambitions. Providing direction for future aquaculture opportunities should include consideration of species or technologies which can support sustainable sector development and ongoing support for collaboration between industry and research bodies. Co-ordinated action at local level between producers, public authorities, research institutes, associations, education and training organisations can help promote activity, with consequent benefits for associated supply chains, and meet the growing demand for locally, sustainably produced aquatic products. The United Kingdom Multiannual National Plan for the Development of Sustainable Aquaculture (MANP)[36] details how the UK government will encourage growth in aquaculture.

Sector Supporting Policy

AQU_01: Aquaculture (supporting)

AQU_01 a: Proposals for new aquaculture developments will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

AQU_01 b: Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities for the sustainable use of aquaculture resources including the identification of:

- **natural resources that provide aquaculture potential**
- **opportunities to define and, once in place, further develop and refine Strategic Resource Areas for aquaculture**

in order to support the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector through marine planning.

Sector Supporting Policy Aim

288. The narrative underpinning the **Aquaculture Sector Objective** sets out the Welsh Government's ambition to support the development of new and diverse sustainable aquaculture activities and to facilitate the sustainable development of further aquaculture production in Welsh waters. **Policy AQU_01 a** aims to support further sustainable development of current activity types, diversify the species cultured and help the sector to plan for the future.

289. Relevant public authorities should support proposals for new aquaculture developments where these are consistent with relevant General Policies and the Safeguarding Policies of this Plan. Decision makers should continue to support the industry in taking opportunities to develop the sector, guiding activity away from more sensitive locations and further offshore (wherever appropriate) whilst being mindful of practical constraints and potential impacts on marine ecosystems. Welsh Government, TCE, industry and NRW should collaborate to ensure that proposals for future activity are progressed in order to help meet the policy aim for sustainable sector development. The industry is encouraged to develop practical, realistic plans to expand activity.

290. Upon successful application, the Welsh Ministers issue Several Orders (SOs) to confer ownership of cultivated shellfish on areas of leased seabed (usually from TCE). In order to provide sector security and encourage investment, SOs will generally be granted for a period of at least 28 years, with a seven yearly review where appropriate. Authorisations and SOs in particularly sensitive areas, in areas where there is less certainty or in areas where there is a need for an adaptive approach may be for a shorter timeframe and may be subject to more rigorous monitoring requirements. Welsh Government will look to grant longer term authorisations and SOs in less sensitive areas.

36 www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-aquaculture-the-united-kingdom-multiannual-national-plan-manp.

291. Where an SO lies within or close to sites designated for marine conservation purposes, the applicant must provide information within the application to enable Welsh Government to undertake an environmental assessment. Welsh Government may also draw on other sources of information when undertaking this assessment. Based on the conclusions of the environmental assessment, Welsh Government may put in place conditions within the SO to guard against potential adverse impacts upon the designated features of any conservation site.

292. **Policy AQU_01 b** recognises that sector development can be supported through capacity building, innovation and collaboration between industry and academic research centres. This policy encourages the aquaculture industry to work in partnership with businesses, government and academia to support the implementation of this Plan, identifying suitable marine areas for further aquaculture activity and opportunities to increase productivity and to diversify the species cultivated, thereby addressing key evidence gaps, including enabling the identification and refinement of SRAs.

293. In preparing aquaculture related proposals, developers should apply this Plan's General Polices and the Safeguarding Policies in relation to all sectors covered by the Plan. Developers should refer to each sector chapter for further information on the Safeguarding Policy in relation to the safeguarding of the interests of that sector.

Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim

294. The following Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narrative sets the safeguarding policies and policy principles to be applied by all new proposals from all sectors when considering their potential impact upon the Aquaculture sector. Developers and decision makers should also apply the safeguarding policy requirements for all other sectors covered by this Plan, as set by the Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narratives of each sector chapter within the Plan.

295. All proposals (including new Aquaculture sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon existing, planned or, from the point at which an SRA is introduced, future potential aquaculture activities in Aquaculture SRAs, should apply this Plan's Safeguarding Policies.

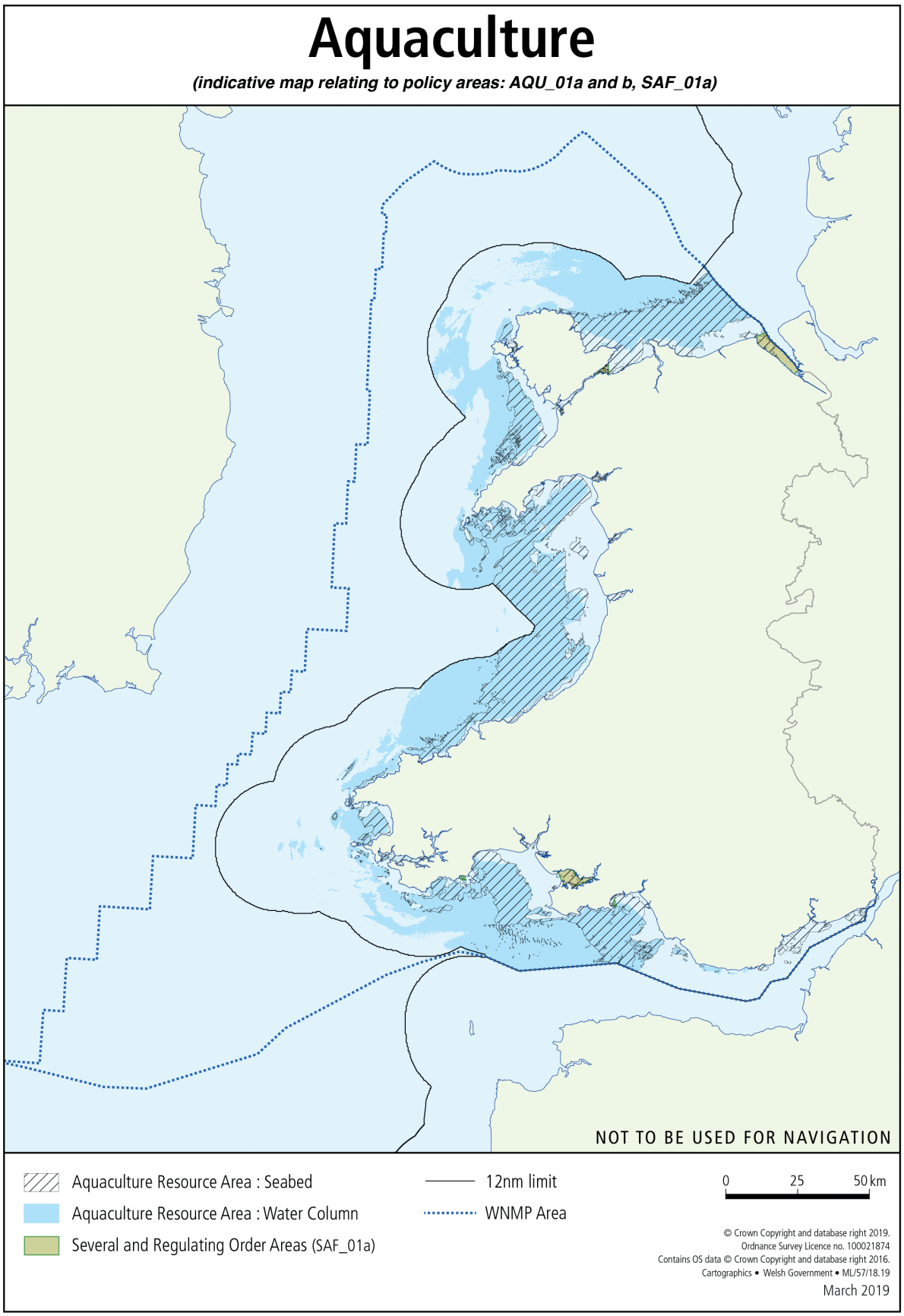
296. **Policy SAF_01 a** reflects the importance of providing security for ongoing operations and protecting investments. It applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new Aquaculture sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon areas where:

- an application for a SO or production rights for aquaculture has been granted or formally applied for;
- a documented formal agreement is in place between the sea-bed owner and an aquaculture operator;
- an Aquaculture Production Business registration is in place or has been applied for.

297. **Policy SAF_02** will apply to all proposals from all sectors (including new Aquaculture sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon areas identified as being SRAs for the Aquaculture sector. SRAs for the Aquaculture sector will identify areas with suitable resource for future use for aquaculture production in the water column or on the sea bed. This policy will apply to an SRA from the point at which that SRA is formally introduced through the publication of a MPN.

298. **Policies SAF_01 a** and **SAF_02** are the means by which Aquaculture sector activity is safeguarded. Therefore, **Policies SAF_01 b** and **DEF_01** are not applicable in relation to the safeguarding of Aquaculture sector activity.

Figure 12: Aquaculture: Indicative map relating to Policy areas



Sector Policy – Defence

299. Defence sector policy applies to both the inshore and offshore regions of the Plan area.

Defence

Sector Objective

> To contribute to the defence of the nation by ensuring that Defence and National Security activities are not compromised.

Sector Objective – Context and Rationale

300. The MOD is responsible for the defence and national security of the people of the UK and UK Overseas Territories and makes a significant contribution to the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales. The MOD encompasses the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force and its reserve forces such as the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (the armed forces).

301. The ability of the MOD to defend the nation is paramount and marine activities and developments must not adversely affect strategic defence interests. The MPS recognises the need for the MOD to maintain and deploy the operational capacity to provide defence and security to the UK.

302. Although there are no major naval bases in Wales, the armed forces make extensive use of Wales' coasts and seas for a range of defence purposes, including exclusive use of certain areas at particular times for training, test and evaluation and operations involving:

- supporting vessels, aircraft and navigational interests;
- conducting military training exercises; and
- operating test and evaluation ranges and facilities including missile firing ranges and unmanned air systems (UAS) and unmanned surface and underwater vehicles (USUV) test areas.

303. The Welsh seas will continue to be used for defence activities, including test and evaluation aspects in order to maintain operational effectiveness throughout UK waters.

Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim

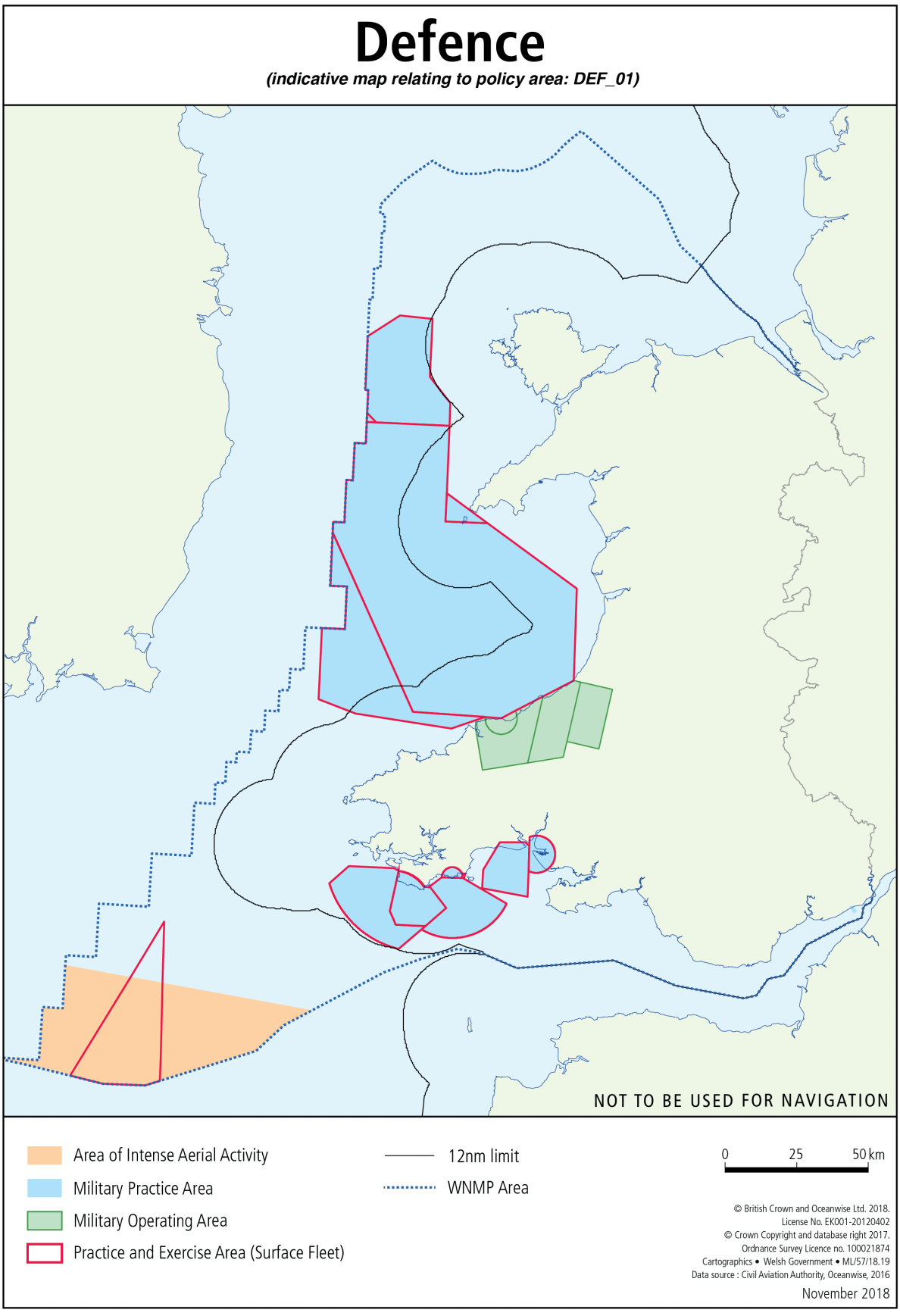
304. The following Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narrative sets the safeguarding policy and policy principles to be applied by all new proposals from all sectors when considering their potential impact upon the Defence sector. Developers and decision makers should also apply the safeguarding policy requirements for all other sectors covered by this Plan, as set by the Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narratives of each sector chapter within the Plan.

305. In recognition of the paramount importance of ensuring that marine activities and developments do not adversely affect strategic defence interests, this Plan sets a specific safeguarding policy – **Policy DEF_01** – which applies to all proposals from all sectors with the potential to impact upon MOD activities. **Policies SAF_01** and **SAF_02** are therefore not applicable in relation to the safeguarding of the interests of the Defence sector.

306. **Policy DEF_01** applies to all proposals from all sectors with the potential to impact upon MOD Danger Areas, Exercise Areas or strategic defence interests and/or potentially interfere with communication, surveillance and navigation facilities necessary for defence and national security. Consent for such proposals will only be granted where the MOD is satisfied that the proposal will not cause unacceptable risk to defence and national security interests. Any development and use that either individually or cumulatively obstructs or otherwise prevents defence activities will not be permitted.

307. This policy is designed to promote a safe and secure Wales in which the armed services are able to fulfil their duties for the defence and security of the nation. It adds clarity to existing national policy (National Planning and Policy Framework Section 164 and the MPS).

Figure 13: Defence: Indicative map relating to Policy areas



Sector Policy – Dredging and Disposal

308. Dredging and Disposal sector policy applies to both the inshore and offshore regions of the Plan area; however, no dredging or disposal activity currently takes place in the offshore region.

Dredging & Disposal

Sector Objective

> To maintain safe and effective navigational access for shipping, fishing and leisure craft and support future growth and increases in port facilities and vessel size whilst promoting the optimal sustainable use of dredged material and ensuring adequate disposal facilities are available.

Sector Objective – Context and Rationale

309. Dredging and disposal includes the removal of material from one area of the seabed and the relocation of the excavated material elsewhere for disposal. Most marine dredging and disposal is for the purposes of navigation of vessels and existing and future port development, although it may also take place to facilitate other marine works. In this way it differs from aggregates dredging, where the primary driver for the activity is recovery of material as an economic resource.

310. Dredging is vital to social and economic development, supporting the construction and maintenance of much of the coastal infrastructure upon which our well-being depends. The MPS recognises the vital role of dredging and disposal for the effective operation of the Ports and Shipping sector, a sector which is an area of priority for Welsh Government and particularly reliant upon dredging and disposal for the safe navigation of vessels in restricted channels. Dredging and disposal is therefore considered an essential activity for the efficient functioning of the Ports and Shipping sector and benefits and supports a wide range of other sectors, including tourism and recreation, aggregates, fishing, aquaculture and marine energy sectors.

311. The amount of dredged material disposed at sea around Wales has remained relatively constant over the last 20 years with a slight reduction in the trend as operators seek to reduce costs. This Plan recognises that the requirement for the disposal of dredged material at sea is in the most part directly linked to the activity of the ports sector and that there will therefore be a limit to the extent to which operators can reduce their maintenance dredging requirements. This, together with the increasing size and draft of vessels and opportunities for port expansion, means that the level of maintenance dredging seems likely to continue at current levels or increase to a relatively small extent. Overall, dredging and disposal is therefore considered by this Plan to be an ongoing function with little requirement for major expansion or technological improvement but with a vital role to play as navigation provision must keep pace with waterborne transport needs in order to support and maintain local, national and regional economies.

Sector Supporting Policy

D&D_01: Dredging and Disposal (supporting)

Proposals that maintain navigable channels and long term access to open at-sea disposal sites for appropriate material will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

Sector Supporting Policy Aim

312. The narrative underpinning the **Dredging and Disposal Sector Objective** sets out the Welsh Government's conclusion that dredging and disposal is an ongoing function essential to maintaining safe and efficient navigational access to ports, harbours and some marinas. It also notes that sector activity is likely to continue at current levels (or increase to a relatively small extent), often correlated with activity in the Ports and Shipping sector e.g. port expansion often involves the need for capital dredging. **Policy D&D_01** therefore seeks to provide confidence to the Ports and Shipping sector that appropriate navigable channels can be established and suitably maintained. Relevant public authorities should collaborate to ensure adequate provision for port access and disposal sites, where this is consistent with relevant General Policies and the Safeguarding Policies of this Plan.

313. The beneficial use of dredged material is encouraged. In accordance with the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011, relevant authorities should apply the waste hierarchy. The disposal of dredged material (whether from navigation or environmental dredging) includes both deposition for beneficial uses (e.g. beach nourishment) and the use of at-sea disposal sites in licensed areas of seabed. Dredged material can be a valuable resource and the preference is, wherever possible, to re-use the material to support other activities, for example actions relating to ecosystem resilience, in engineering projects for construction materials, in flood defences, for land reclamation or for beach nourishment. In some cases, disposal to land may be appropriate.

314. In line with this Plan's General and Safeguarding Policies, new disposal site selection should ensure that the deposition of material does not significantly interfere with, or devalue, other legitimate users and uses of the marine environment, or result in significant adverse effects upon ecosystem resilience.

315. Relevant public authorities should ensure that sediment analysis is carried out with sufficient frequency to be compliant with OSPAR requirements. Sediment samples should be taken every three years unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise.

316. When considering suitable management options, it is generally the preferred option to retain dredged material within the same sediment cell from where it originated, if it can be demonstrated that, in line this Plan's General and Safeguarding Policies, it is environmentally, technically, socially and economically feasible to do so. Preferred areas for disposal are those with a long record of use and/or those that have been characterised to receive dredged materials in line with Chapter 6 of the Dredged material assessment guidelines[37] ("Waste Assessment Guidelines under the London Convention and Protocol: 2014 edition"). Minimising the distance between dredge and re-use/disposal locations can reduce environmental impacts and supports sustainable development.

317. Proposals for the use of closed disposal sites should be the subject of a new application and assessment procedure.

318. Proposals for disposal of non-dredged material into the marine area will need to be carefully considered by public authorities. New disposal activities should only be supported where they can demonstrate there is no alternative option for use of the waste material, where a suitable at-sea disposal site can be identified (through a site characterisation study) and where the activity is not counter to the other objectives and policies of this Plan.

37 Waste Assessment Guidelines under the London Convention and Protocol: 2014 edition, **www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Environment/LCLP/Publications/wag/Pages/default.aspx**; the OSPAR Guidelines for the Management of Dredged Material at Sea – Agreement 2014-06, **www.ospar.org/documents?d=34060**.

319. In preparing Dredging and Disposal related proposals, developers should apply this Plan's General Polices and the Safeguarding Policies in relation to all sectors covered by the Plan. Developers should refer to each sector chapter for further information on the Safeguarding Policy in relation to the safeguarding of the interests of that sector.

Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim

320. The following Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narrative sets the safeguarding policy and policy principles to be applied by all new proposals from all sectors when considering their potential impact upon the Dredging and Disposal sector. Developers and decision makers should also apply the safeguarding policy requirements for all other sectors covered by this Plan, as set by the Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narratives of each sector chapter within the Plan.

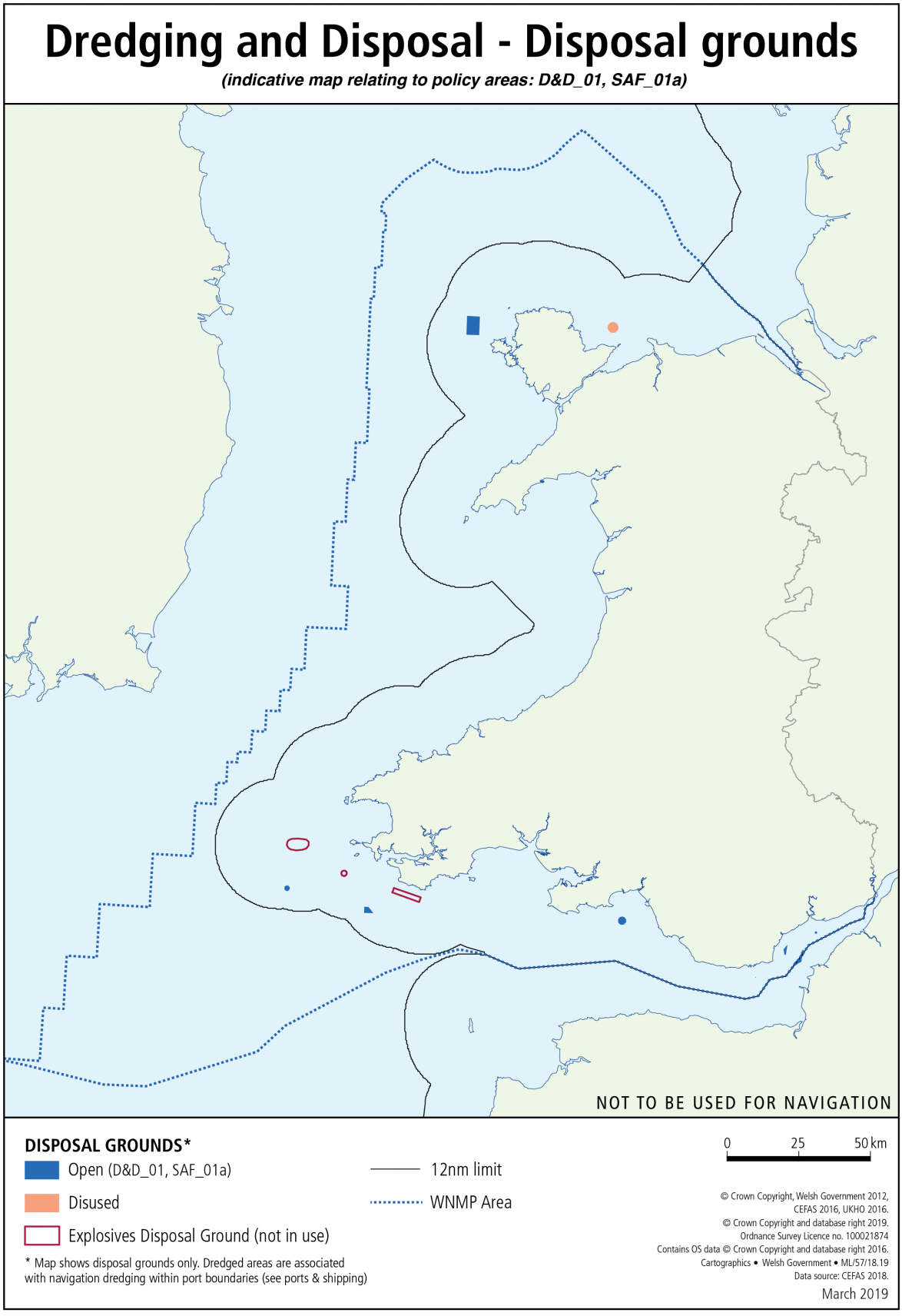
321. **Policy SAF_01 a** applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new Dredging and Disposal sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon existing or planned dredging and disposal activities in:

- areas where a consent or authorisation for navigation dredging or at-sea disposal of dredged material has been granted or formally applied; and
- areas undergoing investigation or survey work for capital dredging or disposal site characterisation.

322. It recognises the work and investment required to identify appropriate sites and apply for a licence which can be costly and time consuming for developers, particularly where alternative options may be limited.

323. **Policy SAF_01 a** is the means by which Dredging and Disposal sector activity is safeguarded. Therefore, **Policies DEF_01**, **SAF_01 b** and **SAF_02** are not applicable in relation to the safeguarding of Dredging and Disposal sector activity.

Figure 14: Dredge and Disposal: Indicative map relating to Policy areas



Sector Policy – Energy – Low Carbon

324. Energy – Low Carbon sector policy applies to both the inshore and offshore regions of the Plan area.

Energy – Low Carbon

Sector Objective 1

To contribute significantly to the decarbonisation of our economy and to our prosperity by increasing the amount of marine renewable energy generated, through:

- Supporting further commercial deployment of offshore wind technologies at scale over the lifetime of this Plan;
- Supporting the development and demonstration of wave energy and tidal stream technologies in the short to medium term;
- Increasing (where appropriate) the number of wave energy and tidal stream energy generation devices deployed in commercial scale developments over the medium term;
- Developing a better understanding of the potential for tidal lagoon power technology; and
- Recognising the potential role of the marine environment in new coastal nuclear energy generation facilities.

Sector Objective 2

To develop Wales as an exemplar of marine renewable energy technology by developing the essential skill base, infrastructure and technical knowledge to support the development of the industry over the next 20 years.

Sector Objective – Context and Rationale

325. In this Plan, the Energy – Low Carbon sector relates to marine renewable energy generation (from wind, wave and tidal resources) and associated activity. It also recognises the potential role of the marine environment in relation to new coastal nuclear power generation facilities.

326. This Plan recognises that marine energy resources around Wales offer a good opportunity to deliver significant renewable energy generation and thereby to make a strong contribution to securing an appropriate mix of sustainable energy provision, delivering social and economic benefit whilst respecting the environment and the needs of local communities.

327. The Welsh Government's ambition is for marine renewable energy to make an increasingly significant contribution to the overall energy mix over the lifetime of this Plan, contributing to achieving the outcomes set out in the Energy Policy Statement Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition (2012)[38]. The Welsh Government's approach to decarbonisation includes reducing the amount of energy we use and reducing our reliance on energy generated from fossil fuels, with the ambition being that the transition to a low carbon economy contributes meaningfully to a wealthier, more resilient and sustainable future[39].

38 www.gov.wales/energy-wales-low-carbon-transition.
39 www.gov.wales/prosperity-all-low-carbon-wales.

Image supplied by: Ørsted

In line with these priorities, Planning Policy Wales (PPW)[40] sets out an Energy Hierarchy for Planning, which is also relevant to the Plan area and states that the planning system should:

- Focus on reducing energy demand and using energy efficiently;
- Facilitate renewable and low carbon energy development;
- Minimise the carbon impact of energy generation; and
- Minimise the extraction of energy minerals, the burning of which is carbon intensive.

328. Alongside this, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 sets a legal target of reducing emissions by a minimum of 80% by 2050 and places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to set a series of carbon budgets and interim targets (for 2020, 2030 and 2040). The Welsh Government has also set targets for the generation of renewable energy:

- For Wales to generate 70% of its electricity consumption from renewable energy by 2030;
- For 1GW of renewable electricity capacity in Wales to be locally owned by 2030; and
- By 2020 for new renewable energy projects to have at least an element of local ownership[41].

329. It is therefore important that relevant public authorities support Government in moving to a secure, diverse and affordable renewable electricity supply, including ensuring an appropriate contribution from marine energy. The marine renewable energy (low carbon) sector is a strategic priority for marine planning and is identified by this Plan as having significant potential for sustainable development over this Plan's lifetime. This is in line with the MPS, which recognises that a secure, sustainable and affordable supply of energy is of central importance to the economic and social well-being of the UK and that the marine environment and marine renewable energy generation will make an increasing contribution to the UK's energy supply. Marine planning itself has an important role in supporting the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure.

330. Increasing the amount of energy generated from renewable and low carbon technologies will contribute to a secure energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support ecosystem resilience and stimulate investment in jobs and business (ranging from research and development (R&D) to device manufacture and device deployment and maintenance). It has been calculated that a 30 megawatt (MW) wave installation and 30MW tidal stream installation have the potential to support 2,000 person-years of employment during development and installation, and 50 full-time equivalent (FTE) per annum during generation. Scaling up to commercial arrays of up to 300MW could generate 8,500 person-years of employment during development and installation and 180 FTE per annum during generation[42]. Estimates include that by 2040 tidal stream could support almost 14,500 jobs and wave energy 8100 jobs across the UK[43].

331. The Plan area includes good wind resource in deeper water, particularly to the west and south west. Offshore wind energy is a proven and strategically important energy technology and the costs of deployment are decreasing rapidly, making this a viable and attractive renewable energy option for Wales, with considerable scope

40 **www.gov.wales/planning-policy-wales**.

41 Oral Statement on "Energy" delivered by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs to the National Assembly for Wales on 26 September 2017 (**www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/pages/rop.aspx?meetingid=4644&assembly=5&c=Record%20of%20Proceedings#C494225**).

42 The Economic Impact of the Development of Marine Energy in Wales **www.gov.wales/economic-impact-development-marine-energy**.

43 **www.marineenergywales.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ORE-Catapult-Tidal-Stream-and-Wave-Energy-Cost-Reduction-and-Ind-Benefit-FINAL-v03.02.pdf**.

for further large-scale offshore wind activity[44]. Offshore wind has significant potential to contribute to renewable energy targets during the lifetime of this Plan whereas other technologies may take time to develop and may make a more limited contribution. Wales was an early adopter of offshore wind, with North Hoyle being only the second offshore wind project to be commissioned in the UK followed by other developments including the larger scale Gwynt y Môr (576MW) windfarm. Offshore wind currently provides the largest single contribution to marine renewable electricity in Wales[45] with Gwynt y Môr capable of powering around 400,000 homes. Meanwhile, the Energy Generation in Wales 2017 report identifies floating wind technology as offering potential for innovation, with the Pembrokeshire demonstration zone and the deeper waters of the outer Bristol Channel and Celtic Sea cited as possible sites for deployment[46].

332. Although currently less well progressed than offshore wind, both wave and tidal technologies also offer significant potential in the medium to long-term. The Marine Energy Infrastructure Study[47] identified a number of factors placing Wales in a competitive position with regard to developing these industries, namely:

- Available marine energy resources;
- Proximity of energy resources to population centres;
- Existing energy industry capability;
- Strong transmission grid infrastructure;
- Existing port facilities and associated supply-chains with the potential to service marine renewable industries;
- Environmental and consenting expertise;
- Academic collaboration and R&D partnerships; and
- Community awareness and engagement.

333. Over the next 5-10 years, tidal stream technologies are likely to be focussed on small scale demonstration devices in prime locations, including the West Anglesey demonstration zone, with subsequent larger scale deployment in other areas of suitable resource likely. Wave technologies are less well progressed and may take longer to be deployed commercially with a similar approach – a smaller scale focus for test devices offering proof of concept followed by larger-scale arrays (most likely in the south west of Wales expanding beyond the Pembrokeshire demonstration zone). However there are a number of challenges to the transition from single-device prototype deployments to commercial-scale arrays for these technologies, including:

- Deployment in challenging wave and tidal conditions;
- Ensuring a robust evidence base to enable management of potential environmental impacts;
- Developing capability and capacity in the supply-chain; and
- Delivering shore-side infrastructure and grid connection.[48]

334. While significant tidal range resource exists around the Welsh coast, tidal lagoon technology is an emerging sector and considerable complexity and uncertainty remains at this stage in planning for the sector. Specific challenges relate to understanding the potential environmental impacts resulting from large scale tidal lagoon infrastructure and methods by which such impacts could be avoided, mitigated or compensated. Large scale tidal lagoon infrastructure also has the potential

44 **www.gov.wales/economic-impact-development-marine-energy**.
45 The Energy Generation in Wales 2017 report **www.gov.wales/energy-generation**.
46 As per footnote 45.
47 Marine Energy Infrastructure Study: Stage B – Final Report **www.gov.wales/marine-energy-infrastructure**.
48 As per footnote 47.

to result in further field and potentially cumulative effects, both within the Plan area and potentially in neighbouring marine plan areas, indicating a need to take a strategic, evidence based approach to this emerging sector.

335. Welsh Government has considered alternatives to the need for large scale deployment of marine renewable technologies and concluded that, whilst opportunities such as reducing demand, supporting other technologies and supporting wider connectivity (in line with the PPW Energy Hierarchy) will make important contributions to climate change mitigation, there is a strategic need to support the development of marine renewable energy generation capacity. Sustainably realising the potential of Wales' marine renewable energy resources should therefore be achieved through the deployment of demonstration and commercial scale renewable technologies. This Plan therefore seeks to maximise appropriate opportunities for sustainable low carbon marine energy solutions as part of Welsh Government's positive planning framework for transitioning to a low carbon economy.

336. The Welsh Government is strongly committed to unlocking the energy potential from Welsh waters and we continue to bring together expertise across government, industry and academia to focus on the delivery of marine energy projects in Welsh waters. We support the sustainable deployment of marine renewable devices that can advance understanding and promote the sustainable development of the sector. The Welsh Government is also committed to the development of Wales as an exemplar of renewable energy technology, skills and knowledge in the marine renewable energy sector.

337. The Welsh Government considers nuclear energy has the potential to add a reliable and efficient source of electricity to the low carbon energy mix the UK needs to address the real and urgent challenge of climate change. The UK Government is ultimately responsible for decisions relating to nuclear generating stations with an installed generating capacity of above 350MW. Having considered the matter carefully, the Welsh Government has taken the decision to support nuclear development on existing sites because of its ability to help us achieve the low carbon future we want to see and at the same time provide an opportunity for economic growth. However, Welsh Government recognises the risks that nuclear brings. Although land-based, if nuclear installations are deployed on the coast to rely upon water cooling purposes, then abstraction and discharge consents will be required.

338. Coherence across land-sea planning and consenting and with wider electricity cable considerations are important to ensure sufficient capacity to enable grid connection of new technologies.

Sector Supporting Policy

ELC_01: Low carbon energy (supporting) wind

ELC_01 a: Proposals for offshore wind energy generation will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

Proposals for wind >350MW will be considered by UK Government in accordance with relevant national policy. In determining an NSIP for a wind proposal, the decision maker will have regard to this plan. Any determination in relation to energy developments of any scale will be taken in accordance with this plan alongside any other relevant considerations.

ELC_01 b: In order to understand future opportunities for offshore wind development, including floating technologies, this plan supports strategic planning for the sector. Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities for the sustainable use of wind energy resources including identification of:

- **natural resources that provide potential opportunity for future use;**
- **evidence to de-risk consenting for the sector; and**

- opportunities to define and, once in place, further develop and refine Strategic Resource Areas for offshore wind energy resource safeguarding;

in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning.

Relevant public authorities should make appropriate evidence available to support planning and decision making in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning, where it is appropriate to do so.

ELC_02: Low carbon energy (supporting) wave

ELC_02 a: Proposals for wave energy generation will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

ELC_02 b In order to understand future opportunities for wave energy development, relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities for the sustainable use of wave energy resources including identification of:

- natural resources that provide potential opportunity for future use;
- evidence to de-risk consenting for the sector; and
- opportunities to define and, once in place, further develop and refine Strategic Resource Areas for wave energy resource safeguarding;

in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning.

Relevant public authorities should make appropriate evidence available to support planning and decision making in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning, where it is appropriate to do so.

ELC_03: Low carbon energy (supporting) tidal stream

ELC_03 a: Proposals for tidal stream energy generation will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

ELC_03 b: In order to understand future opportunities for tidal stream energy development, relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities for the sustainable use of tidal stream energy resources including identification of:

- natural resources that provide potential opportunity for future use;
- evidence to de-risk consenting for the sector; and
- opportunities to define and, once in place, further develop and refine Strategic Resource Areas for tidal stream energy resource safeguarding;

in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning.

Relevant public authorities should make appropriate evidence available to support planning and decision making in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning, where it is appropriate to do so.

ELC_04 Low carbon energy (supporting) tidal range

ELC_04: In order to understand future opportunities for tidal range development, strategic planning for the sector is encouraged. Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to:

- collect evidence to support understanding of environmental constraints and opportunities for the sustainable use of the tidal range resource;
- support understanding of the optimal siting of tidal lagoon developments across Wales as part of a wider, UK perspective; and
- identify opportunities to define and, once in place, further develop and refine Strategic Resource Areas for tidal lagoon safeguarding purposes.

Relevant public authorities should make appropriate evidence available to support planning and decision making in order to support the sustainable development of the sector through marine planning, where it is appropriate to do so.

Sector Supporting Policy Aim

339. The narrative underpinning the **Energy – Low Carbon Sector Objectives** sets out the Welsh Government's conclusion that there is significant potential and a strategic need to develop marine renewable energy generation in the Plan area. It identifies offshore wind energy as a proven and strategically important technology with considerable scope in the near term for further large-scale

development. It also recognises that wave and tidal technologies may offer medium to longer-term potential, with the current focus for these sectors being on smaller scale demonstration and test development coupled with strategic evidence development.

340. This Plan's **Energy – Low Carbon Supporting Policies** therefore support the development of renewable energy activities and seek to ensure that the Plan area's potential for energy generation from renewable sources is achieved (in line with climate and energy targets), giving due regard to relevant environmental, social and cumulative impact considerations. In relation to **Policy SOC_07**, it is accepted that the development of marine renewable energy infrastructure will result in changes to the seascape character of Wales and that these changes are an inevitable result of our ambition for marine renewable energy to make an increasingly significant contribution to the overall energy mix.

341. In determining applications for renewable and low carbon energy development and associated infrastructure, planning authorities should give significant weight to the Welsh Government's targets to increase renewable and low carbon energy generation. Decision makers should take into account:

- the contribution a proposal will make to meeting identified Welsh, UK and European targets and potential for renewable energy;
- the contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and
- the contribution to the objectives and other policies of this Plan.

342. These policies recognise that the Welsh Government is committed to continuing to explore all options for marine renewable energy, particularly those projects that positively contribute to the wellbeing of our coastal communities. Given the importance and ambition of decarbonisation targets, this Plan does not rule out at a strategic plan-level any technologies which can demonstrate environmental sustainability in line with the Plan's objectives and policies.

343. **Policy ELC_01b** encourages relevant public authorities and industry to collaborate to better understand and identify future opportunities for new development, including working through the Offshore Energy Strategic Environment Assessment (OESEA)[49] and with TCE. Given the extensive wind resource, the geography of the seabed, developing technologies and the policy need for an increase in renewable energy generation, there is good opportunity in the Plan area for further offshore wind developments and these are encouraged during the lifetime of this Plan. Opportunities for both extending existing developments and for bringing forward new sites are encouraged. It is anticipated that the initial focus for offshore wind will be fixed foundation technologies but that within the lifetime of this Plan floating technologies may also become commercially viable and should be progressed where appropriate. An indicative illustration of early stage modelled opportunity is given at Figure 15b and an indicative map of wind resource area at Figure 15c.

344. Under **Policies ELC_02** and **ELC_03** the use of demonstration zones should be supported and facilitated by using a risk-based approach to consenting, employing adaptive management where this is necessary and appropriate for the management of impacts that are hard to predict at the point of decision making in line with **Policy SCI_01**. The Welsh Government is working with TCE, NRW, industry, Marine Energy Wales and others to progress testing and demonstration zones for wave and floating wind and tidal stream energy in order to enhance and further develop knowledge and understanding of risks, opportunities and capabilities. The demonstration zones off south Pembrokeshire (wave) and west Anglesey (tidal stream) provide good opportunity for developers

49 **www.gov.uk/guidance/offshore-energy-strategic-environmental-assessment-sea-an-overview-of-the-sea-process**.

to deploy, refine and demonstrate their technologies before expanding projects into wider commercial scale resource areas, subject to successful tests and acceptability in terms of potential adverse effects.

345. Proposals for wave energy and tidal stream energy generation should consider opportunities to work collaboratively to promote and increase the attractiveness of the demonstration zones for development, for example by undertaking preparatory activity such as survey work, the installation of infrastructure or seeking pre-consent at the zone level. Relevant public authorities should encourage and support pro-active, strategic activity to enable these sectors to develop. Such an approach should be expanded, where appropriate, into wider areas of suitable resource.

346. **Policies ELC_01**, **ELC_02**, **ELC_03** and **ELC_04** all recognise that different technologies are at different stages of development and further work is needed to both enable the renewable energy sub-sectors to plan and develop sustainably and to understand the optimal contribution that each sub-sector can make towards supporting the objectives of this Plan and Wales' wellbeing goals. These policies therefore encourage developers and relevant public authorities, along with other relevant organisations such as research institutes and industry bodies, to develop and participate in opportunities to address key evidence gaps and make evidence available in order to better understand opportunities for the sustainable development of the sectors including within SRAs.

347. A significant tidal range resource exists around the Welsh coast and this Plan recognises the need to consider all viable marine energy policy options to address the imperative of decarbonising the economy. However, **Policy ELC_04** also recognises that, based upon available evidence, the Welsh Government considers that there is a degree of complexity and uncertainty associated with the sustainable development of tidal lagoons around the Welsh coast. Effects upon protected sites, including beyond Wales, cannot be ruled out at the level of this Plan and without further research. Further evidence would enable a better understanding of options for managing potential adverse environmental effects of large scale tidal lagoon schemes including opportunities to identify and secure effective compensatory measures where necessary.

348. Welsh Minsters are committed to supporting the sustainable development of all marine renewable energy options which can demonstrate environmental sustainability in line with this Plan's objectives and policies. **Policy ELC_04** therefore aims to provide for the stepwise development of the sector through focusing on developing wider evidence, including maximising learning from any demonstrator projects, in order to allow for a greater understanding of future opportunities and to facilitate the development of national policy. This Plan does not preclude tidal lagoon demonstrator or large scale tidal lagoon projects from coming forward; such projects would be considered on their merits and on a case by case basis.

349. Tidal lagoon policy continues to develop at the time of Plan adoption. The potential environmental issues associated with sustainably developing large scale tidal lagoons around Wales, coupled with the need for strategic planning, including cross borders considerations, suggests a strategic approach is necessary in order for the sector to be given the necessary confidence to develop. Any large scale tidal lagoon project (above 350MW) that came forward would be determined as a NSIP and as such would likely benefit from a UK NPS being in place.

350. In preparing all Energy – Low Carbon related proposals under all of the Supporting Policies for this sector, developers should apply this Plan's General Polices and the Safeguarding Policies in relation to all sectors covered by the Plan. Developers should refer to each sector chapter for further information on the Safeguarding Policy in relation to the safeguarding of the interests of that sector.

NSIPs

351. Applications for new NSIP development above 350MW will be examined using the criteria on national need, benefits and impacts as set out in relevant NPS. For energy infrastructure this will include the relevant NPS for Energy Infrastructure (EN-1-6). The energy NPSs set out national policy against which proposals for major energy projects will be assessed and examined.[50]

352. Marine energy NSIPs could have extensive implications for the natural resources and activities that occur in the Plan area. In taking decisions on NSIPs, the relevant public authority must have regard to this Plan.

353. Welsh Ministers would expect that in determining any proposal for NSIPs, project legacy for coastal communities will be an important consideration and such proposals are expected to apply the policy principles which are set out in the section on NSIPs in the Introduction to this Plan.

Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim

354. The following Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narrative sets the safeguarding policies and policy principles to be applied by all new proposals from all sectors when considering their potential impact upon the Energy – Low Carbon sector. Developers and decision makers should also apply the safeguarding policy requirements for all other sectors covered by this Plan, as set by the Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narratives of each sector chapter within the Plan.

355. This Plan's safeguarding policies recognise the need to give appropriate consideration to safeguarding the availability of marine renewable energy resources which may support future low carbon energy generation.

356. **Policy SAF_01 a** applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new low carbon sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon areas where a consent or authorisation for renewable energy generation has been granted or formally applied for, as well as areas where an exploration or option agreement has been offered or is in place for renewable energy generation, including energy demonstration zones and test sites which the UK Government, TCE, NRW and/or Welsh Government have identified as strategically important but for which no licence or permit for exclusive use of the area may yet have been issued.

357. **Policy SAF_02** applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new low carbon sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon areas identified as being SRAs for the Energy – Low Carbon sector. SRAs for the Energy – Low Carbon sector will relate to areas that contain suitable resource with potential to support future renewable energy generation. This policy will apply to an SRA from the point at which that SRA is formally introduced through the publication of a MPN.

358. **Policies SAF_01 a** and **SAF_02** are the means by which Energy – Low Carbon sector activity is safeguarded. Therefore, **Policies SAF_01 b** and **DEF_01** are not applicable in relation to the safeguarding of Energy – Low Carbon sector activity.

50 **www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-policy-statements-for-energy-infrastructure.**

Figure 15(a): Energy – Low Carbon (Tidal stream and wave energy resources): Indicative map relating to Policy areas

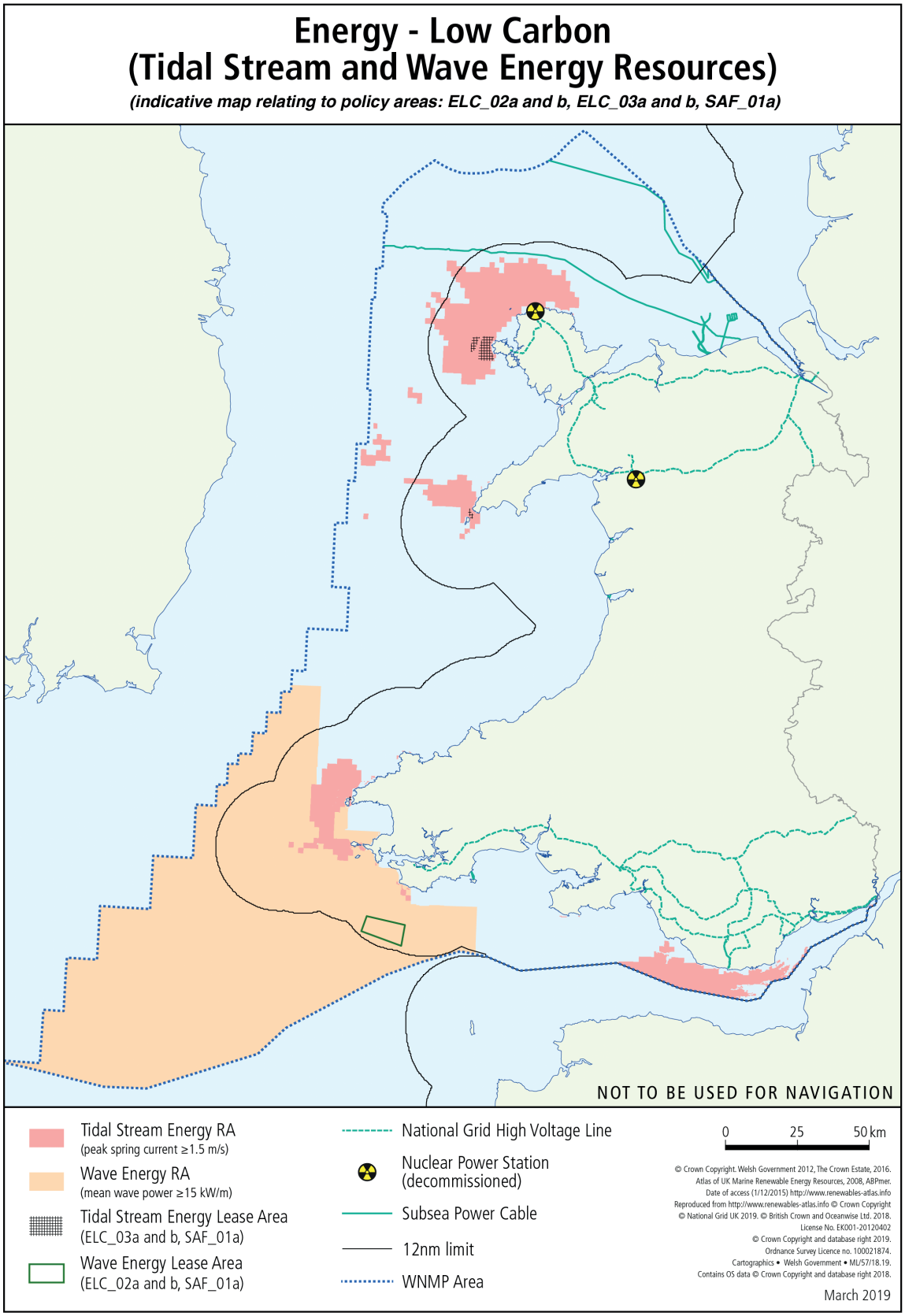


Figure 15(b): Energy – Low Carbon (Wind): Indicative map relating to Policy areas

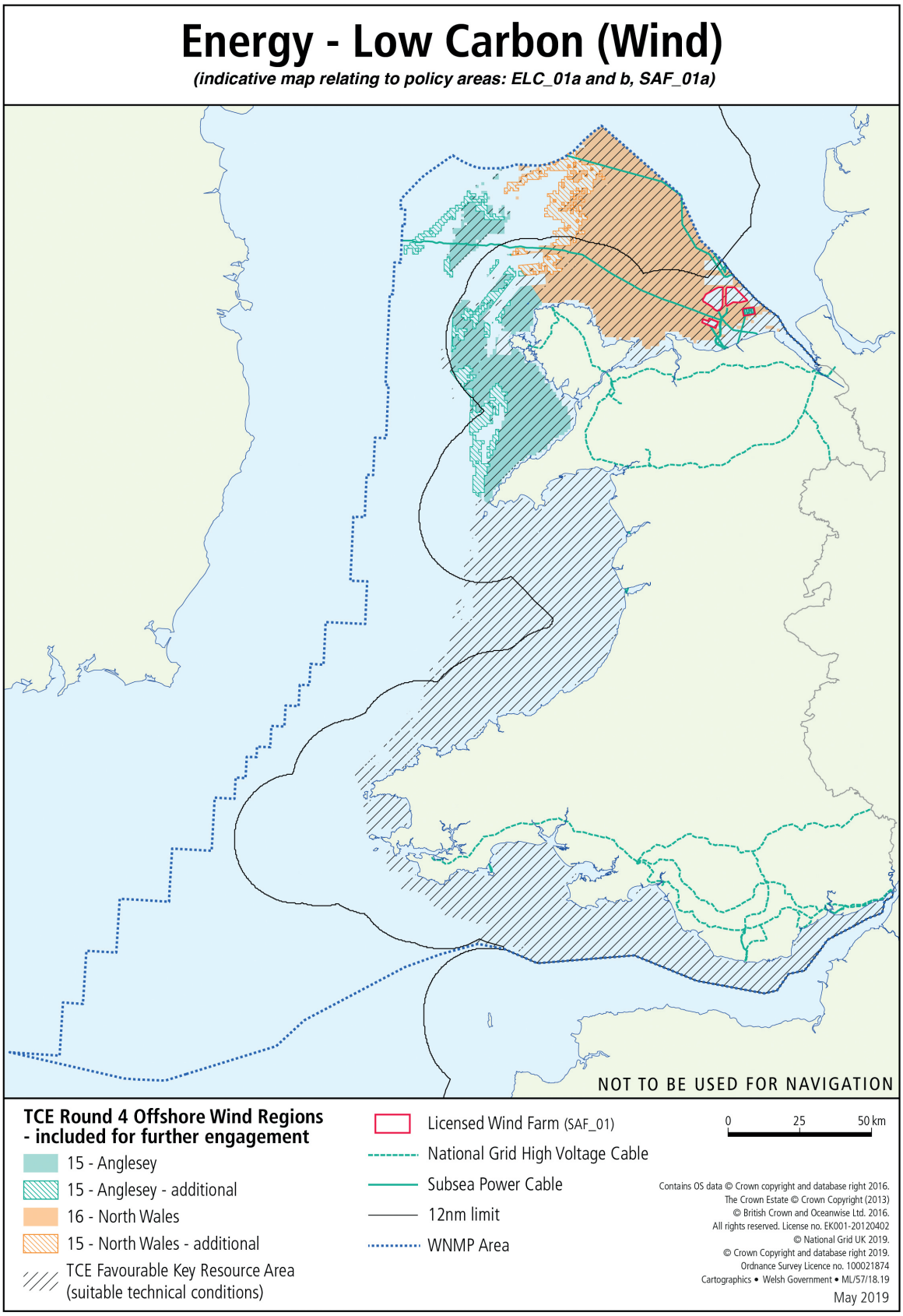


Figure 15(c): Energy – Low Carbon (Wind power and wind farm sites): Indicative map relating to Policy areas

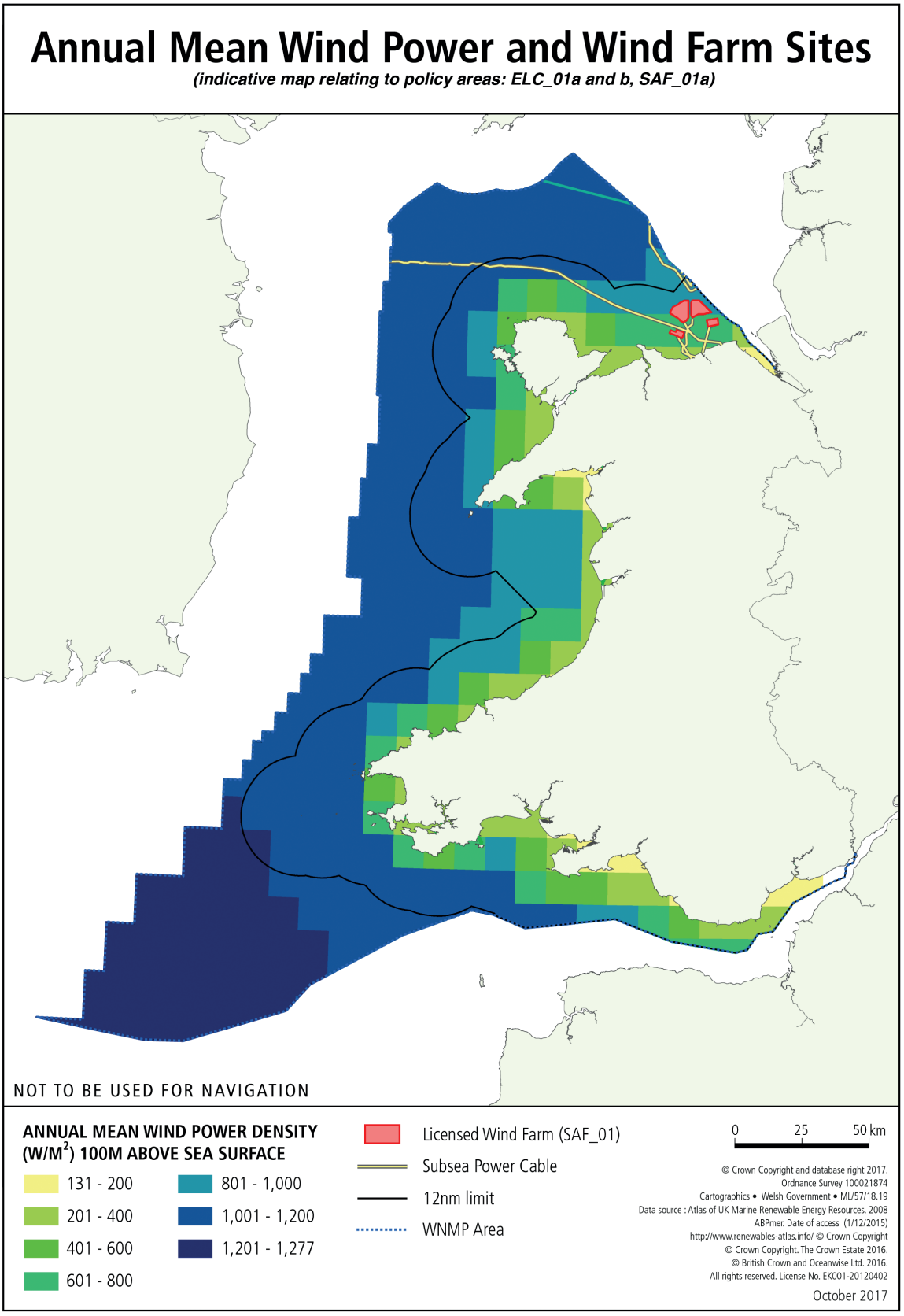
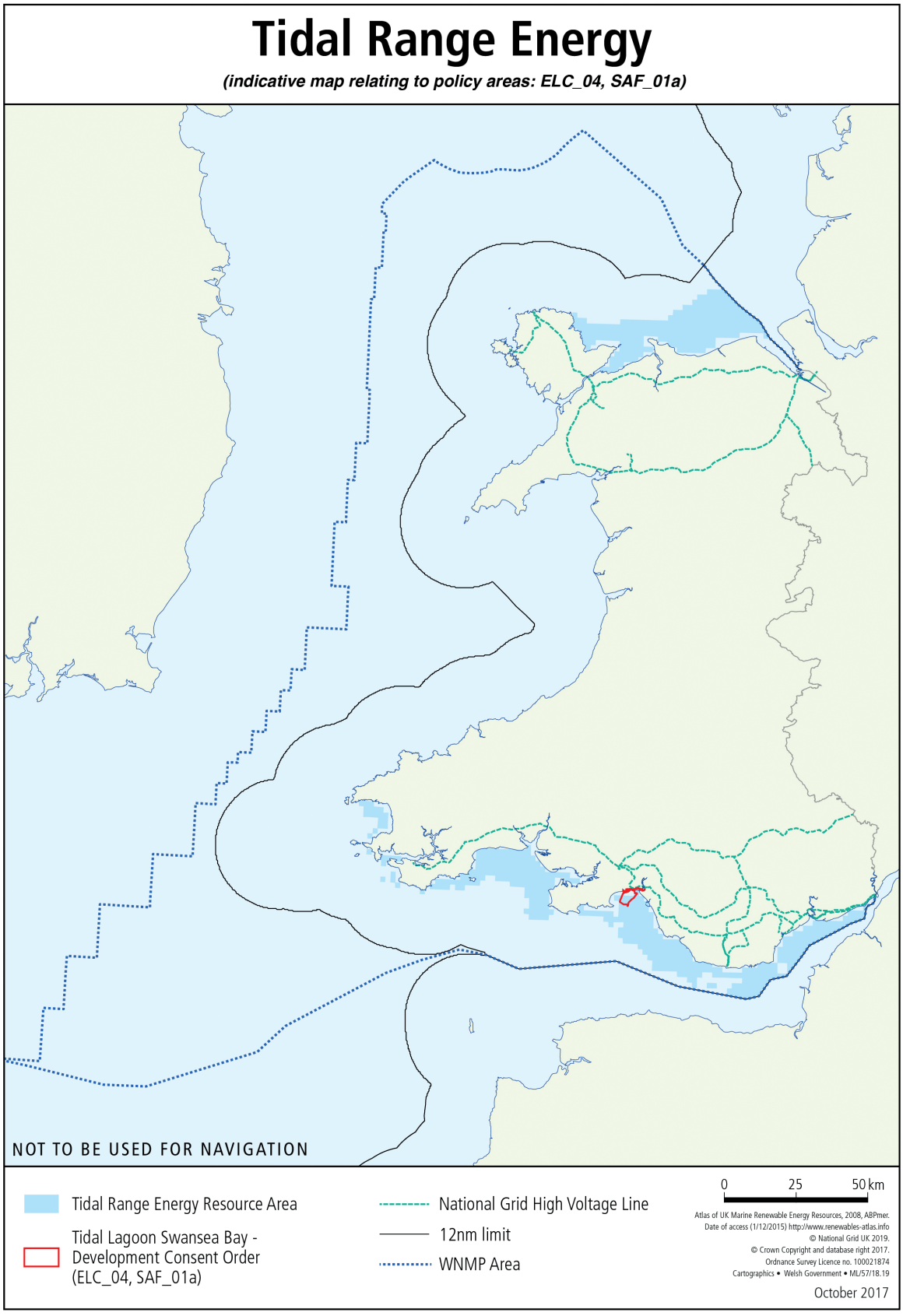


Figure 15(d): Energy – Low Carbon (Tidal range energy resources): Indicative map relating to Policy areas



359. Oil and Gas sector policy applies to both the inshore and offshore regions of the Plan area.

Energy – Oil and Gas

Sector Objective

> Maximising the sustainable recovery of UK oil and gas in order to provide commercial and domestic consumers with a secure, affordable and resilient supply of energy whilst meeting UK decarbonisation goals.

Sector Objective – Context and Rationale

360. Responsibilities for energy licensing, consenting and permitting in the Plan area is divided between the UK and Welsh Governments and the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA). This Plan provides an opportunity for integration of the respective policies.

361. The Wales Act 2017 devolves oil and gas licensing to the Welsh Government for onshore areas and internal waters (intertidal areas, estuaries and coastal inlet areas). Beyond these limits the relevant licensing authority is the OGA.

362. This Plan sets out an integrated, evidenced and plan-led approach for the sustainable development of the marine area, supporting relevant authorities to take a more holistic view that has regard for the impact of potential decisions and the priority attached to economic and social benefit whilst minimising carbon emissions of potential projects.

363. Oil and gas sector policy in this Plan reiterates UK Government national policy, with the exception of intertidal areas, estuaries or coastal inlet waters which fall within the Welsh onshore licence area[51] where, under the Wales Act 2017, Welsh Government policy applies.

364. Oil and gas includes the exploration, development and production of oil and gas resources, including shale gas, coal bed methane and underground coal gasification, by both conventional and unconventional means.

Welsh Government policy for the Welsh onshore licence area

365. In line with the provisions of the Wales Act 2017, Welsh Government policy applies to intertidal areas, estuaries or other coastal inlet waters falling within the Welsh onshore licence area.

366. The Welsh Government is committed to moving to a low carbon energy system, with the long-term aim of removing fossil fuels from the energy mix whilst minimising adverse economic impact and providing clarity for investors, encouraging investment in lower carbon alternatives. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 sets a legal target of reducing emissions by a minimum of 80% by 2050 and places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to set a series of carbon budgets and interim targets (for 2020, 2030 and 2040). **The Welsh Government's policy objective is therefore to avoid further extraction and consumption of fossil fuels, including shale gas, coal bed methane and underground coal gasification.**

367. One of the key policy levers available to the Welsh Government is the Planning system. Welsh Government land use planning policy set out in PPW[52] states the Planning system should:

- minimise the carbon impact of energy generation; and
- minimise the extraction of energy minerals, the burning of which is carbon intensive.

Marine developments with land based elements must therefore also include consideration of Welsh land use planning policy.

51 www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1686/made.
52 www.gov.wales/planning-policy-wales.

UK Government National Policy

368. Oil and gas (both from the UK continental shelf and imports) accounted for 82.99% of primary energy supply in 2017. Oil and gas from the UK continental shelf satisfied about 60% of total UK oil and gas demand in 2017 (65% of oil demand and 54% of gas demand) and is noted by the Oil and Gas UK Economic Report 2018 as being crucial to meeting the expected needs of the economy over the next 20 years whilst avoiding over-dependence on imports.[53]

369. Although indigenous production is now in long-term decline; UK Government national policy recognises that oil and gas are expected to remain important as the UK moves towards a low carbon economy. This policy also recognises that obtaining the UK's hydrocarbon supplies from indigenous sources minimises dependence on foreign imports and thus enhances the security of the UK's energy supply. The MPS states that maximising the economic development and recovery of oil and gas resources sustainably is a priority for the UK's energy supply and energy security strategies, and this is now being implemented through the Maximising Economic Recovery (MER) UK strategy[54]. Oil and gas development is also recognised by UK Government policy as being an important source of employment, supplying valuable chemicals for the manufacturing of goods and being a significant contributor to tax revenue.

370. This Plan therefore recognises that fossil fuel resources (including oil and gas) will continue to play an important role in the UK's energy mix. In order for the UK Government policy objective of maximising economic recovery to be achieved, new areas for discoveries will need to be explored.

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

371. The Energy Generation in Wales 2017 report recognises that gas, as a flexible, reliable, responsive energy source with lower emissions than other fossil fuels, is expected to continue to play a gradually diminishing role in the energy mix[55]. However, it is unlikely to be a long-term basis for the energy economy of Wales without measures to mitigate the environmental effects, such as carbon capture and storage (CCS). This Plan therefore recognises the need to identify and exploit opportunities for the wider use of CCS. Such opportunities are currently understood to be small because of the geology of Wales and, consequently, there are currently no known suitable depleted oil and gas reservoirs. Should a development opportunity arise during the term of this Plan, it is likely to be located to the north of Wales, associated with the potential use of the Liverpool Bay gas reservoirs.

53 **www.oilandgasuk.cld.bz/Economic-Report-2018**.
54 **www.ogauthority.co.uk/media/3229/mer-uk-strategy.pdf**.
55 **www.gov.wales/energy-generation**.

Sector Supporting Policy

O&G_01: Oil and gas (supporting)

O&G_01 a: Proposals that maximise the economic recovery of oil and gas sustainably will be supported where they comply with the objectives of this plan, and fully meet the environmental safeguards contained within the statutory processes of awarding production licences and subsequent activity-specific approvals. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

O&G_01 b: Welsh Government policy is to avoid the continued extraction of fossil fuels in intertidal areas and estuaries and coastal inlet waters that fall within the Welsh onshore licence area. Applications for new petroleum licenses in these areas should not be supported, unless required for mine safety or scientific purposes. Proposals for the development and extraction of oil and gas in these areas with land based elements must provide robust and credible evidence to demonstrate how they conform to the Planning Policy Wales Energy Hierarchy for Planning, including how they make a necessary contribution towards decarbonising the energy system.

O&G_02: Oil and gas (supporting)

Proposals that support the long-term development of carbon capture and storage technology will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

Sector Supporting Policy Aim

372. In preparing oil and gas related proposals, developers should apply the relevant General Polices of this Plan and the Safeguarding Policies in relation to all sectors covered by the Plan. Developers should refer to each sector chapter for further information on the Safeguarding Policy in relation to the safeguarding of the interests of that sector.

Policy O&G_01 a

373. **Policy O&G_01 a** applies to offshore and inshore areas subject to UK Government national policy.

374. The narrative underpinning the **Oil and Gas Sector Objective** aligns with the national UK Government policy on the continued significance of fossil fuels to ensuring the UK's energy security and reducing reliance on imports. It identifies a clear need to explore and access new areas to maximise economic recovery.

375. **Policy O&G_01 a** recognises the continued role of fossil fuels during the lifetime of this Plan in the transition to a low carbon energy mix and ensures that supplies of non-renewable energy resources are used as efficiently as possible. The policy supports the development of oil and gas activities, where these are consistent with relevant General Policies and the Safeguarding Policies in this Plan, provided the proposals fully meet environmental safeguards contained within statutory processes of awarding production licences and subsequent activity-specific approvals.

376. Under **Policy O&G_01 a**, proposals for oil and gas activities should maximise the expected net value of economically recoverable reserves, in line with the obligations set out in the MER UK strategy, ensuring that the reserves are recovered as efficiently as possible.

Policy O&G_01 b

377. **Policy O&G_01 b** applies to intertidal areas, estuaries and coastal inlet waters that fall within the Welsh onshore licence area.

378. **Policy O&G_01 b recognises that the development and extraction of oil and gas in areas that fall within the Welsh onshore licence area does not align with the Welsh Government's long-term vision of a low-carbon Wales or the policy which seeks to minimise the extraction of carbon intensive energy materials, reducing our reliance on unsustainable fuel sources**. All proposals for the development or extraction of oil and gas that have land based elements must therefore provide robust and credible evidence to demonstrate how they conform to the PPW Energy Hierarchy for Planning[56]. **This must include demonstrating how they will make a necessary contribution towards decarbonising the energy system, as well as demonstrating how they align to the principles and ways of working of the WFGA and the Natural Resources Policy (NRP).**

379. Notwithstanding the above provision, applications for new petroleum licences within the Welsh onshore licence area will only be considered to ensure the safe management of abandoned mines or to support scientific research (petroleum includes any mineral oil or relative hydrocarbon and natural gas existing in its natural condition in strata but does not include coal or bituminous shales or other stratified deposits from which oil can be extracted by destructive distillation).[57] **Proposals to extract petroleum outside the Welsh onshore licence area that require infrastructure on land will be required to be compatible with Welsh Government's decarbonisation approach**. This does not preclude development by alternative means e.g. floating production storage and offloading vessel or export by tanker.

380. Unconventional oil and gas proposals for coalbed methane, shale gas and underground coal gasification that fall within the Welsh onshore licence area are subject to Notification Directions that require all such proposals to be referred to the Welsh Ministers, should the relevant public planning authority be minded to approve the application. Applications in existing licensed areas to extract petroleum involving hydraulic fracturing will not be supported.

Policy O&G_02

381. **Policy O&G_02** applies to the inshore and offshore Plan area, including intertidal areas, estuaries and coastal inlet waters falling within the Welsh onshore licence area.

382. The narrative underpinning the **Oil and Gas Sector Objective** identifies a need to consider opportunities for mitigating the environmental effects of fossil fuels through measures such as CCS.

383. **Policy O&G_02** is intended to safeguard energy supply whilst minimising carbon emissions. Given the challenges of energy security, this policy recognises a continued reliance on oil and gas during the transition to low carbon energy. Nevertheless, opportunities to reduce carbon emissions from the use of oil and gas should be sought. CCS, if successfully commercialised and supported by an appropriate regulatory framework, will be a vital component of our medium to long term energy future. It can provide a solution consistent with current demands, whilst giving the time needed to develop alternative renewable approaches.

56 **www.gov.wales/planning-policy-wales**. This hierarchy aims to minimise the carbon impact resulting from energy generation and to discourage proposals supported by fossil fuels.

57 The Petroleum Act 1998 (**www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/17/contents**). Under this Act, petroleum includes any mineral oil or relative hydrocarbon and natural gas existing in its natural condition in strata but does not include coal or bituminous shales or other stratified deposits from which oil can be extracted by destructive distillation.

NSIPs

384. Applications for new NSIP gas supply infrastructure and gas and oil pipelines will be examined using the criteria on national need, benefits and impacts as set out in relevant NPS. For gas and oil supply infrastructure this will include the relevant NPS for Energy Infrastructure (EN-1 and EN-4). The energy NPSs set out national policy against which proposals for major energy projects will be assessed and examined.

385. Marine energy NSIPs could have extensive implications for the natural resources and activities that occur in the Plan area. In taking decisions on NSIPs, the relevant public authority must have regard to this Plan.

386. Welsh Ministers would expect that in determining any proposal for NSIPs, project legacy for coastal communities will be an important consideration and such proposals are expected to apply the policy principles which are set out in the section on NSIPs in the Introduction to this Plan.

Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim

387. The following Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narrative sets the safeguarding policy and policy principles to be applied by all new proposals from all sectors when considering their potential impact upon the Oil and Gas sector. Developers and decision makers should also apply the safeguarding policy requirements for all other sectors covered by this Plan, as set by the Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narratives of each sector chapter within the Plan.

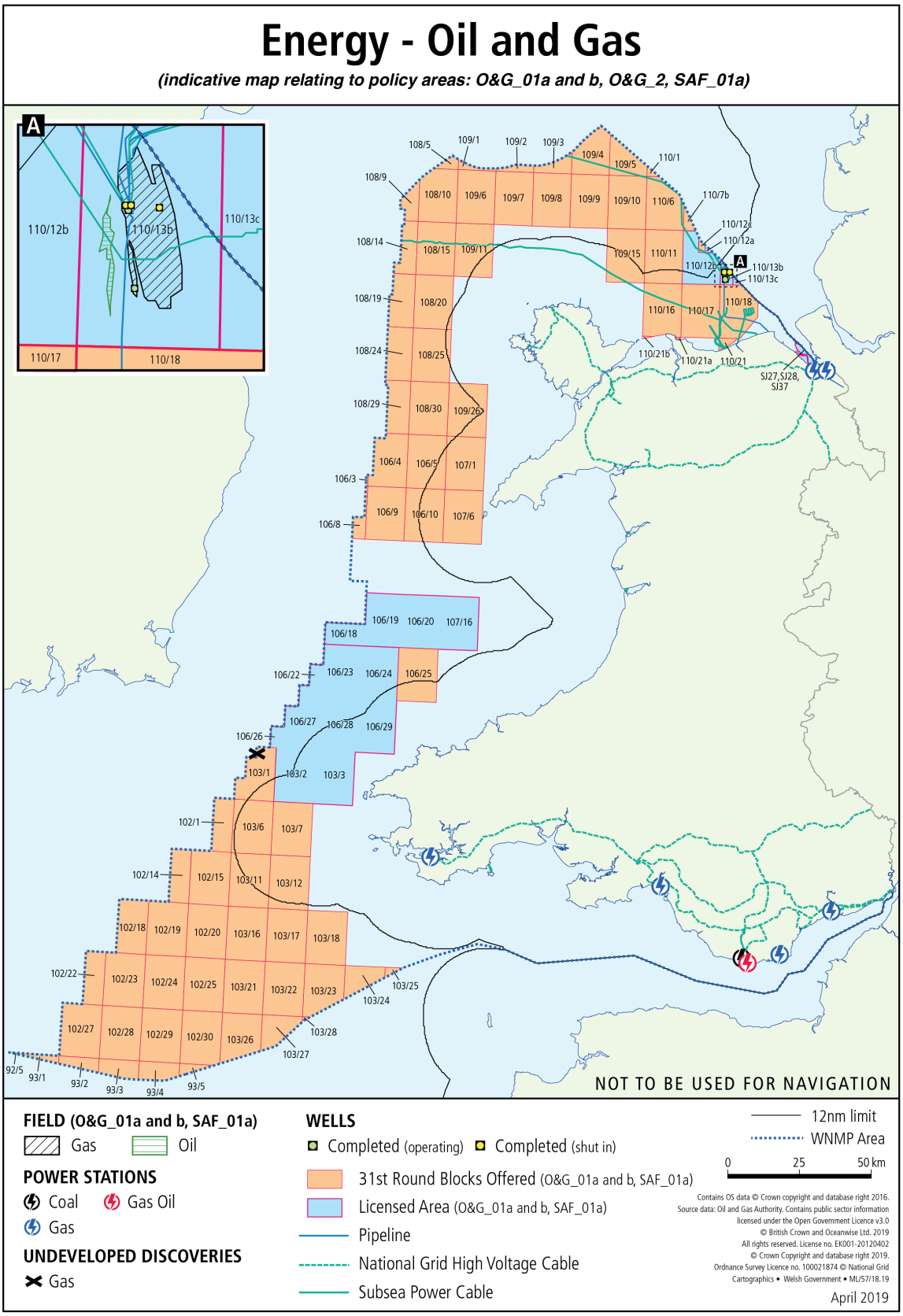
388. **Policy SAF_01 a** applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new Oil and Gas sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon areas where licences have been awarded or where oil and gas developments have been approved or applied for. This policy helps to identify parties with interest in utilising/developing the same areas and to facilitate a dialogue between them and the relevant public authorities at the earliest opportunity to identify constraints and opportunities for coexistence.

389. **Policy SAF_01 a** also applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new Oil and Gas sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon future potential activity in areas (blocks) offered for oil and gas licensing, in order to prevent the sterilisation of areas that are prospective for oil and gas and to ensure that any new proposals within such areas are compatible with the Oil and Gas sector.

390. The decision maker shall refer to the MPS and to any relevant guidance or Cabinet Statement that may from time to time be issued, as well as having regard to whether any compensatory agreement has in principle been reached between respective sector interests.

391. **Policy SAF_01 a** is the means by which Oil and Gas sector activity is safeguarded. Therefore, **Policies DEF_01**, **SAF_01 b** and **SAF_02** are not applicable in relation to the safeguarding of Energy – Oil and Gas sector activity.

Figure 16: Energy – Oil and Gas: Indicative map relating to Policy areas



392. Fisheries sector policy applies to both the inshore and offshore regions of the Plan area.

Fisheries

Sector Objective

> To support and safeguard a sustainable, diversified and profitable fishing sector including promoting sustainable capture fisheries and optimising the economic value of fish caught as a supply of sustainable protein.

Sector Objective – Context and Rationale

393. The MPS states that 'the UK has a long history of fishing in both inshore and offshore waters which the UK administrations wish to see continue'. It makes clear that the process of marine planning will 'enable the coexistence of compatible activities wherever possible' and supports the reduction of real and potential conflict as well as maximising compatibility and encouraging coexistence of activities.

394. To ensure the long-term viability of the commercial fishing sector, fishing activity should be managed sustainably and not have an adverse effect on wider ecosystem resilience. In practice, this means working towards ensuring stocks are managed at Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), which is part of achieving GES under Descriptor 3 of the UK Marine Strategy. Sustainable fisheries are based on using natural resources in a way and at a rate that maintains and enhances marine ecosystem resilience, resulting in a viable fishing sector that does not threaten the resilience of fish populations over the long term and fishing practices that do not harm the ability of fish populations to reproduce and stocks to recover. Safety considerations also rank highly, as the fishing sector is typically a very hazardous occupation.

395. The Welsh commercial sea fishing sector is a diverse industry active across the inshore and offshore Plan regions with most activities occurring within six nautical miles of the coast. The focus for most vessels is principally on crustacean and molluscan shellfish but also on a range of finfish, notably sea bass, plaice, sole and rays. A thriving recreational sea angling sector also exists in Wales (addressed in the Tourism & Recreation sector chapter of this Plan). A particular characteristic of the Welsh fishing sector is that it comprises mainly small businesses operating from the shore or from small (<10m) vessels operating from dispersed coastal locations. Small vessel and fixed location operations are particularly constrained and therefore vulnerable to disruption and possible displacement.

396. This Plan recognises that the commercial fishing sector is a key contributor to many rural coastal communities where employment opportunities can be limited. The economic and social value of the sector goes beyond the first sale value of fish and fishery products; it also has cultural and heritage linkages and in so doing often adds to a coastal location's identity. Fish and shellfish are an important source of protein; their availability can therefore contribute to a healthier Wales and food security.

397. The Welsh Government is committed to planning positively for the sustainable future of the commercial fishing sector. This Plan therefore recognises that opportunities for sustainable diversification and/or increasing the value of existing activities and catch should be supported and encourages future planning to address challenges associated with climate change.

Image supplied by Pysgod.cymru

Sector Supporting Policy

FIS_01: Fisheries (supporting)

FIS_01 a: Proposals that support and enhance sustainable fishing activities will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

FIS_01 b: Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities to develop a strategic evidence base to improve understanding of opportunities for the sustainable development of fisheries in order to support the sustainable development of the fisheries sector through marine planning.

Sector Supporting Policy Aim

398. The narrative underpinning the **Fisheries Sector Objective** sets out the Welsh Government's ambition to support and safeguard Wales's commercial fishing sector through identifying and supporting opportunities for sustainable diversification and delivering added value. While fishing activities are, by and large, not regulated through the marine licensing system, **Policy FIS_01 a** seeks to support the sustainable development of a commercial fishing industry which respects the principles of MSY and minimises by-catch and adverse impacts on non-target species. Public authorities should therefore positively consider opportunities to support the sector, in dialogue with sector representatives, where these are consistent with relevant General Policies and the Safeguarding Policies of this Plan.

399. Commercial stocks of finfish are frequently fully exploited, leaving little opportunity for expansion. Due to the long history of fishing the emergence of new unfished areas is unlikely. Planning ahead should therefore focus on improving the economic strength of the sector. This hinges upon increasing the economic value of what is already caught, as well as developing the evidence base (**Policy FIS_01 b**) to identify opportunities to sustainably exploit species which are currently under-utilised, where these fish populations are sufficiently resilient to sustain increased activity. The sector may also be able to diversify; fishing vessels can potentially be used for tourism and recreation, research and monitoring and support vessel purposes at certain times of the year.

400. Sector development opportunities should focus on improving transport systems to keep catches fresh and minimise wastage, alongside measures to add value rather than to increase catch levels. Opportunities include using existing mechanisms e.g. marketing co-operatives, as well as developing new markets for new products, greater local processing and product enhancement with more effective logistics, all of which lower costs and improve profitability.

401. The availability of fishing activity data in inshore waters is a limiting factor in understanding and taking account of the importance of different fishing grounds. **Policy FIS_01 b** therefore encourages the sector to work with relevant public authorities and other interested parties to identify important fishing grounds so that these can be taken into account in a strategic and systematic way that supports the coexistence of fishing with other sectors. This evidence based approach can only be taken forward with the support of the sector. Mapping these areas does not mean that planning policy support for the sector in other areas where lower levels of fishing takes place will be diminished, but it should help to reduce conflict and improve compatibility in areas of greatest strategic importance to the sector.

Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim

402. The following Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narrative sets the safeguarding policy and policy principles to be applied by all new proposals from all sectors when considering their potential impact upon the Fisheries sector. Developers and decision makers should also apply the safeguarding policy

requirements for all other sectors covered by this Plan, as set by the Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narratives of each sector chapter within the Plan.

403. **Policy SAF_01 b** applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new Fisheries sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon or displace established fisheries activities.

404. In line with positive planning, **Policy SAF_01 b** seeks to enable established activities to continue and thrive wherever possible. Public authorities should, wherever possible, encourage opportunities for coexistence between established fishing activities and any new proposals.

405. **Policy SAF_01 b** recognises that much of Wales' fishing activity is often very localised and dependent upon a particular area or habitat. Unlike larger, more nomadic vessels with mobile gears, Welsh inshore vessels cannot easily relocate to other areas where the available space and catch opportunity is likely to be limited. If decisions by public authorities were to require displacement, resulting in the permanent relocation of fishing vessels to other areas, such relocation is unlikely to be a viable option for individual fishers. Any disruption to fishing activity, even temporary, may impact upon the financial viability of small, location-based businesses.

406. There may also be other social or economic effects associated with permanent displacement, such as new grounds being less profitable for fishers, or beyond the capacity of some vessels and/or unable to provide the mix of species on which current business models rely. Displacement may also increase pressure on any alternative grounds into which fishing efforts may be concentrated, resulting in a greater impact on stocks or increased damage to the ecosystem.

407. **Policy SAF_01 b** therefore makes provision for the particular sensitivities of the Welsh commercial fishing sector to displacement, especially the risk of permanent displacement, to be taken into account by developers and decision makers.

408. This Plan recognises that in order to support fisheries activities, fish life-cycles and the ecosystems upon which they depend need to be sustained. Developers and decision makers should also refer to **Policy Env_07**, which requires proposals to consider potential adverse impacts upon feeding, breeding and migration areas and habitats for key commercial and protected species.

409. **Policy SAF_01 b** is the means by which Fisheries sector activity is safeguarded. Therefore, **Policies DEF_01**, **SAF_01 a** and **SAF_02** are not applicable in relation to the safeguarding of Fisheries sector activity.

Figure 17(a): Fish – Fishing Activity (Mobile Gear): Indicative map relating to Policy areas

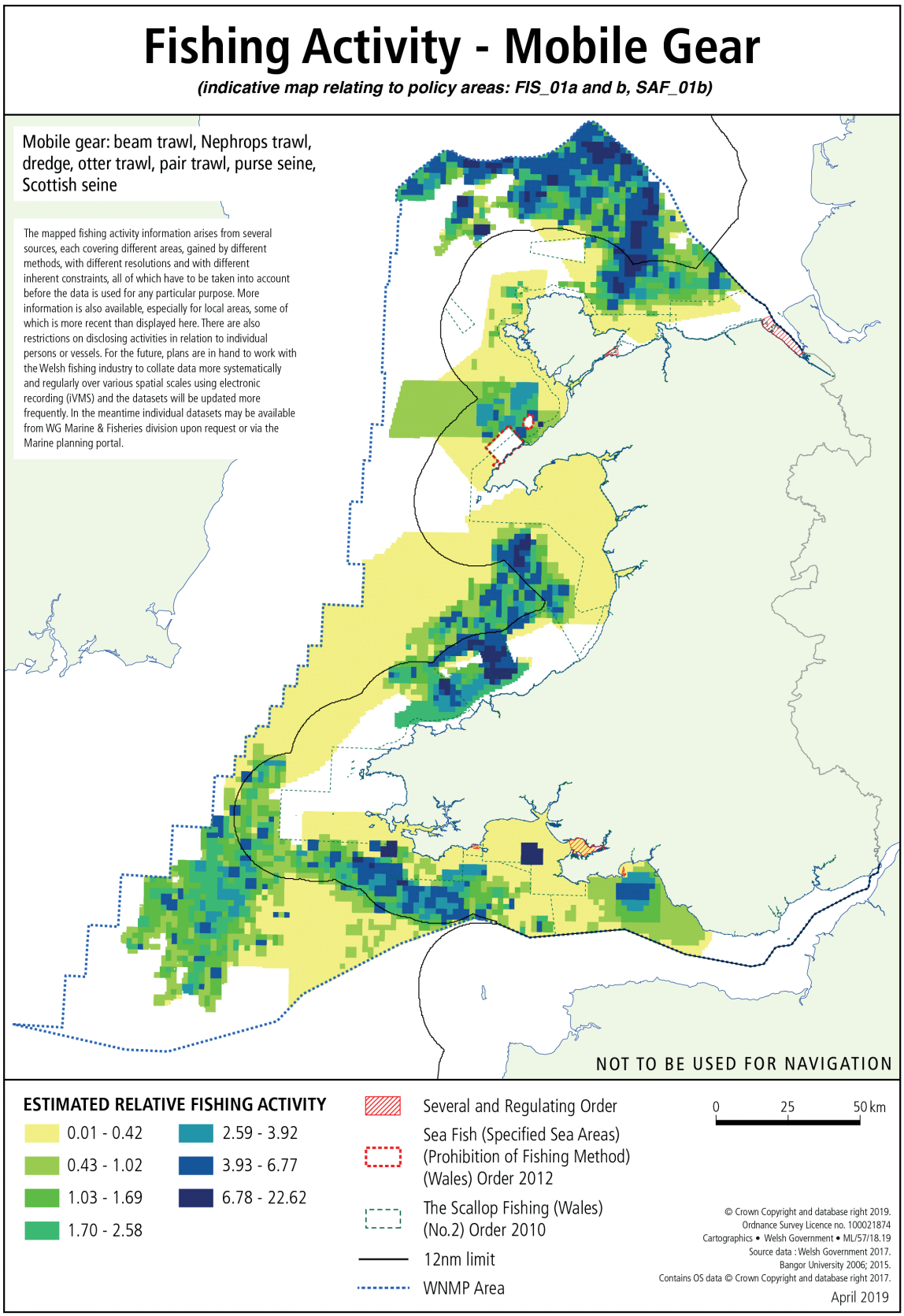
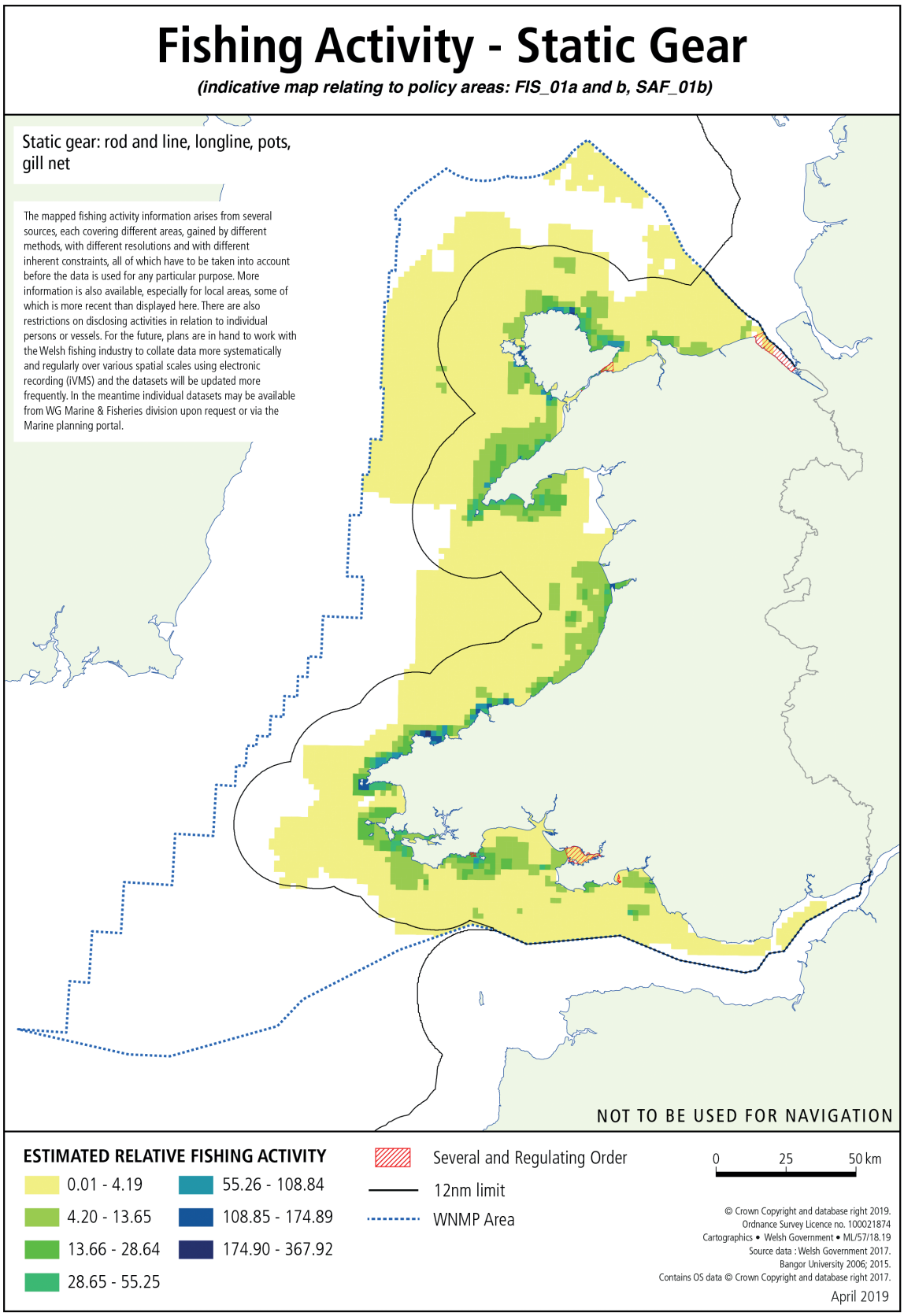


Figure 17(b): Fish – Fishing Activity (Static Gear): Indicative map relating to Policy areas



Sector Policy – Ports and Shipping

410. Port sector policy is not applicable to the offshore region of the Plan area. Shipping sector policy applies to both the inshore and offshore regions of the Plan area.

Ports and Shipping

Sector Objective

> To safeguard established shipping routes and support sustainable development in the shipping and ports sector.

Sector Objective – Context and Rationale

411. The Ports and Shipping sector covers the construction, operation and maintenance of ports, harbours and terminals and marinas to support the commercial and ancillary activities associated with shipping cargo and transporting passengers by sea, and work associated with offshore energy (oil, gas and renewables) industries.

412. The MPS recognises that ports and shipping are an essential part of the UK economy, providing a major conduit for the country's imports and exports and key transport infrastructure between land and sea. The sector is critical to the effective movement of cargo and people as part of networks or supply chains within the UK and as part of the global economy. This Plan therefore identifies the Ports and Shipping sector as an area of priority for future development for Wales and a strategic priority for marine planning.

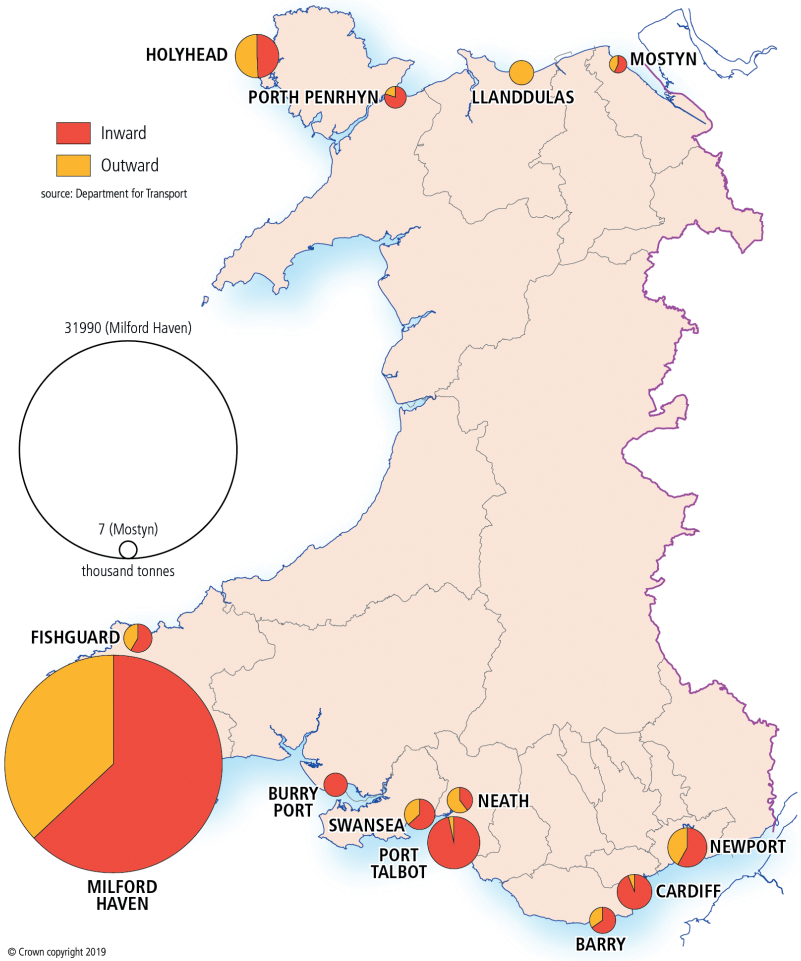
413. There are a variety of major and smaller ports across Wales, all of which play an important role in transporting freight, providing logistical and service hubs for industry, exploiting the key growth opportunity offered by the cruise industry and supporting local fishing, tourism and recreation activity.

414. Milford Haven is the largest port in Wales and the largest liquid bulk port in the UK. Holyhead, Fishguard and Pembroke Dock provide key roll-on roll-off (Ro-Ro) ferry links with Ireland for the whole of the UK and mainland Europe for the transport of passengers and cargo. Newport, Cardiff, Port Talbot and Swansea specialise in bulk shipments. Welsh ports also already play an important and growing role in the cruise market. This traffic, along with energy related traffic at Milford Haven, makes the above areas the busiest waters for shipping within the Plan area. Examples of smaller but nevertheless significant Welsh ports include Mostyn, which supports offshore wind construction and servicing and the export of aircraft wings (Airbus), and Barry, which supports local chemical industries. Substantial port facilities also exist in the Bristol Channel at the Port of Bristol, adding significantly to shipping traffic in the region.

415. Shipping activity in the Plan area comprises established navigation routes for commercial cargo and passenger vessels, widespread navigation of smaller vessels and associated aids to navigation, such as lighthouses, buoys and telecommunications equipment. These, along with areas such as anchorages and pilot boarding places, play an essential role in the movement and safety of maritime traffic. There are also International Maritime Organisation (IMO) routes operating as Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) areas off Pembrokeshire, North Anglesey and in Liverpool bay. Busier traffic areas occur around areas of access to ports and around headlands (e.g. Anglesey and Pembrokeshire).

Image supplied by: Seafish

All freight traffic, by port and direction, 2017



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May 2019
OGL

All traffic by cargo type and direction, 2017

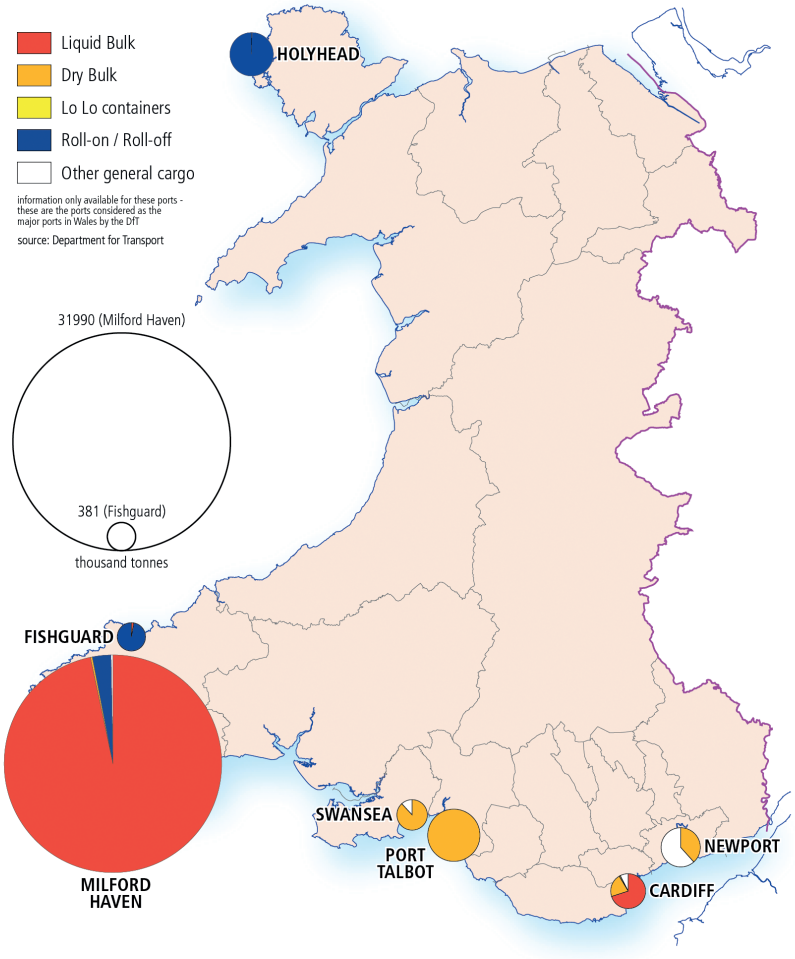


Figure 18: All Port Freight Traffic and Cargo type

416. The Welsh and UK Governments share an ambition to see port, harbour and marina development act as an engine for economic development; supporting sustainable transport with more efficient links and supporting sustainable development. The provision of sufficient port and shipping capacity will remain an essential element of ensuring sustainable development and will remain strongly linked to the state of the Welsh economy. This Plan therefore recognises that Welsh ports have the potential to expand and diversify their operations, playing a greater role within inter-modal freight networks. It also recognises that an increase in 'short sea shipping' activities has the potential to help improve the sustainability of the freight network, as well as playing a key role in enhancing local economic development and jobs.

417. Investment in ports, harbours and marinas can unlock potential to boost the economy both directly through the greater use of the facilities and indirectly through the opportunities that improved maritime transport infrastructure provide for other sectors (both nationally and internationally). This can make Wales an attractive location for businesses, visitors and freight transportation, and play a vital role in supporting jobs and the wider economic development of the communities in which the ports are situated.

418. The activities of the Ports and Shipping sector support a wide range of other sectors and depend upon and support a diverse range of associated activities and services including shipbuilding and repair, storage and warehousing. Many ports have also become the location for industrial clusters of private companies while this Plan anticipates that ports will play an increasingly significant role in supporting the development of the marine renewables sector.

419. Ports, harbours and marinas also support tourism and recreation by providing vibrant waterfront destinations as well as landing points for passenger ferries, cruise ships and other marine tourism operators and offering facilities for recreational users.

420. Port Master Plans provide relevant authorities with a strategic view of the potential direction of future port development.

421. Ports and shipping are sensitive to economic trends and the activities of other sectors; such dynamics are variable and therefore difficult to forecast. However, current trends indicate:

- larger ships which require larger ports and wider/deeper navigational channels;
- sustained growth of 3% to 4% on average per year in the container and Ro-Ro sectors;
- opportunities to host value added processes such as manufacturing, e.g. supporting and servicing offshore renewable energy, particularly for ports in close proximity to developments;
- a growing cruise ship industry that represents a clear opportunity for Wales; and
- opportunities in servicing the fishing industry and a growing marine leisure industry.

Sector Supporting Policy

P&S_01: Ports and Shipping (supporting)

P&S_01 a: Proposals for ports, harbours and shipping activities will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

P&S_01 b: Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities to support the sustainable development of the ports and shipping sector through marine planning.

P&S_02: Ports and Shipping (supporting)

Proposals that provide for the maintenance, repair, development and diversification of port and harbour facilities will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

Sector Supporting Policy Aim

422. The narrative underpinning the **Ports and Shipping Sector Objective** sets out the Welsh Government's conclusions on the importance of both maintaining and further developing functional and attractive port, harbour and marina facilities in order to accommodate current and projected future increases in demand from the freight, bulk commodity, passenger and leisure markets, both in and out of the UK (including navigation access).

423. **Policies P&S_01** and **P&S_02** therefore aim to support the sustainable development of port, harbour and marina infrastructure, operations and shipping, where these are consistent with relevant General Policies and the Safeguarding Policies of this Plan. These supporting policies recognise the essential contribution to the economy of Wales provided by international and domestic trade, and the strategic role of ports in supporting a wide range of other marine sectors.

424. Port development must be responsive to changing commercial demand. **Policies P&S_01** and **P&S_02** recognise this requires flexibility to ensure that port capacity is located where it is required in order to ensure effective competition and resilience in port operations.

425. Holyhead, Mostyn, Milford Haven (including Pembroke Dock), Port Talbot, Newport and Swansea have all been identified as having the greatest competitive advantage in exploiting opportunities arising from low carbon and renewable energy generation, although this does not preclude niche roles for other ports. Facilities to support cruise visits will also be an increasingly important component of Welsh port capacity and **Policies P&S_01** and **P&S_02** recognise that future investment in infrastructure to support Welsh cruise tourism is important.

426. In determining an application for port development, the decision-maker should accept that a case has been made for the need for ports to grow to meet future demand and therefore take decisions that will align with Government's objectives and policy for transport, including PPW, relevant LDPs and SDPs and this Plan's policies. Where a Statutory Harbour Authority has worked with stakeholders to produce a Port Master Plan or other formal development plan, public authorities should take that plan and its descriptions of future development into account as a relevant consideration as an indication of support and need for the project at a local level.

427. Most ports, harbours and marinas have significant landholdings and the terrestrial planning system is key to their future development. Co-ordination between marine and terrestrial planning will be important to sustain and facilitate the development of port, harbour and marina businesses and associated enterprises. PPW complements the policies in this Plan, requiring planning authorities to plan positively to promote the use of ports through the protection or provision of access to them and by the retention or provision of appropriate facilities.

428. **Policy P&S_01 b** encourages developers and relevant public authorities, along with other relevant organisations such as research institutes and industry bodies, to develop and participate in opportunities to address key evidence gaps and better understand opportunities for the sustainable development of the sector.

429. In preparing Ports and Shipping related proposals, developers should apply this Plan's General Polices and the Safeguarding Policies in relation to all sectors covered by the Plan.

Developers should refer to each sector chapter for further information on the Safeguarding Policy in relation to the safeguarding of the interests of that sector.

NSIPs:

430. Applications for new NSIP port developments will be examined using the criteria on national need, benefits and impacts as set out in relevant NPS. For port developments, this will include the relevant NPS for Ports, which sets out national policy against which proposals for major new port developments will be assessed and examined.

431. Port development NSIPs could have extensive implications for the natural resources and activities that occur in the Plan area. In taking decisions on NSIPs, the relevant public authority must have regard to this Plan.

432. Welsh Ministers would expect that in determining any proposal for NSIPs, project legacy for coastal communities will be an important consideration and such proposals are expected to apply the policy principles which are set out in the section on NSIPs in the Introduction to this Plan.

Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim

433. The following Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narrative sets the safeguarding policies and policy principles to be applied by all new proposals from all sectors when considering their potential impact upon the Ports and Shipping sector. Developers and decision makers should also apply the safeguarding policy requirements for all other sectors covered by this Plan, as set by the Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narratives of each sector chapter within the Plan.

434. **Policy SAF_01 a** applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new Ports and Shipping sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon existing ports, harbours and marinas, including navigation routes within port, harbour and marina boundaries.

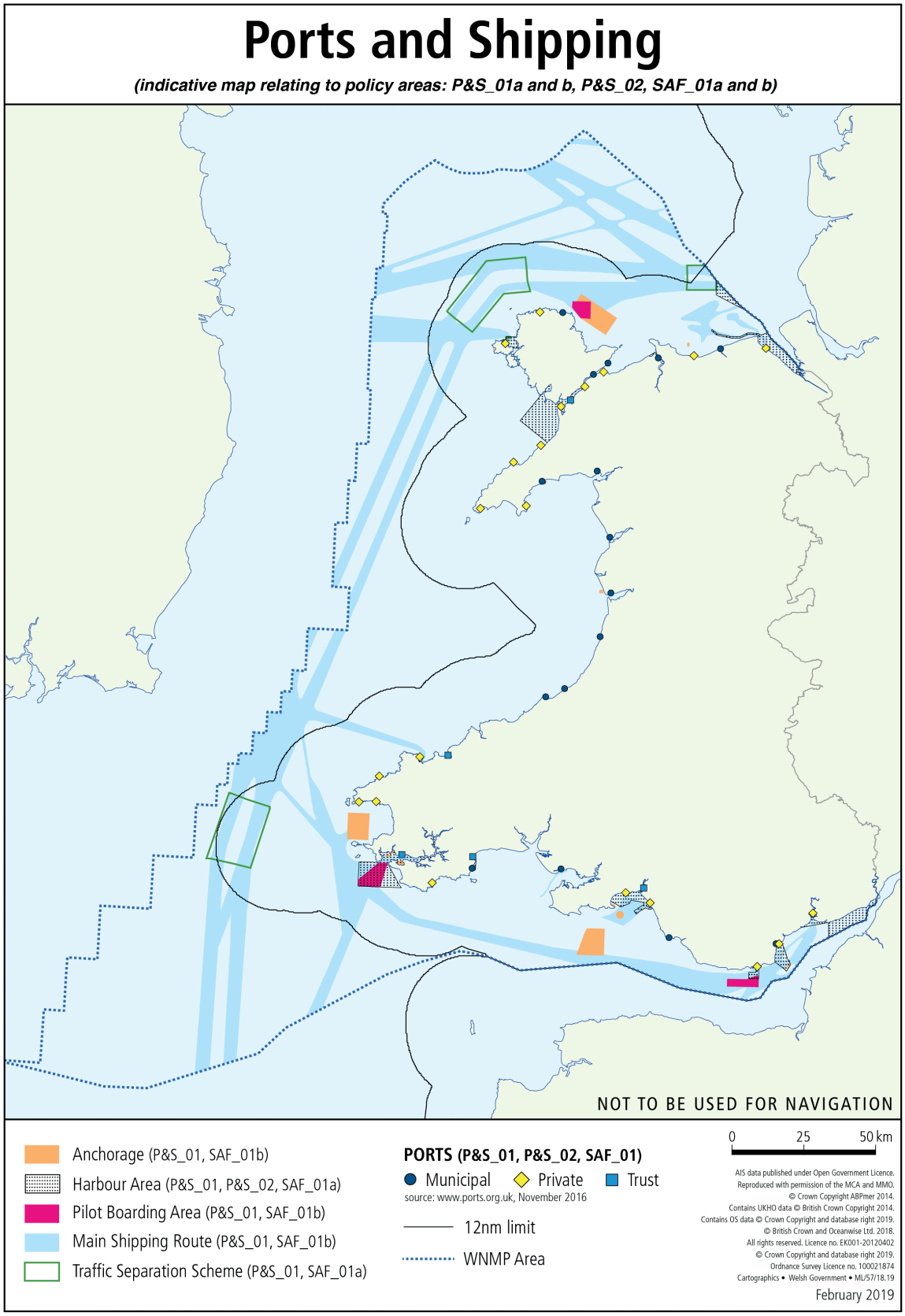
435. **Policy SAF_01 b** applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new Ports and Shipping sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon established commercial navigation routes, pilot boarding areas and commercial anchorages outside of existing port, harbour and marina boundaries.

436. These safeguarding policies seek to minimise negative impacts on shipping activity, ensure freedom of navigation and navigational safety which are provided under international law, and protect the efficiency and resilience of continuing port operations, including their economic interests. They do this by ensuring that developments or other activities which may restrict ports and shipping in terms of continuing current operations and responding to future development opportunities are considered and addressed in decision making. They also recognise the significant potential for coexistence of compatible activities with ports and shipping. Displacement of shipping should be avoided where possible.

437. Public authorities should only issue consent if they are satisfied that the proposal will not adversely impact on navigational safety or have an unacceptable impact on shipping activities and freedom of navigation and are in compliance with national and international maritime law.

438. **Policies SAF_01 a** and **SAF_01 b** are the means by which Ports and Shipping sector activity is safeguarded. Therefore, **Policies DEF_01** and **SAF_02** are not applicable in relation to the safeguarding of Ports and Shipping sector activity.

Figure 19: Ports and Shipping: Indicative map relating to Policy areas



Sector Policy – Subsea Cabling

439. Subsea Cabling sector policy applies to both the inshore and offshore regions of the Plan area.

Subsea Cabling

Sector Objective

> To support the optimal distribution of electricity and better global communications through the growth of digital communication networks.

Sector Objective – Context and Rationale

440. In this Plan the Subsea Cabling sector includes the deployment, maintenance and decommissioning of subsea telecommunication and electricity (power) transmission cables.

441. The MPS recognises that subsea cables are the backbone of the world's power, information and international telecommunications infrastructure and socially and economically crucial to the UK. Submarine telecommunication cables carry over 97% of the world's international traffic including telephone, internet and data, as well as many services for the UK's local communities, major utilities and industries. The transatlantic cables landing in the UK carry more than 70% of Europe's transatlantic internet traffic.[58]

442. The Welsh Government recognises that widespread access to affordable, secure telecommunications infrastructure is important to society and that international telecommunications connectivity relies almost entirely on the subsea networks within UK waters, which therefore represent essential, strategically important infrastructure. Whilst at present there are relatively few telecommunication subsea cables in the Plan area, this Plan recognises that the number is expected to increase to accommodate the needs for growth in data communication. Recent substantial investment has delivered a fibre optic corridor linking Dublin to Holyhead and onward to the UK and Europe. However, if forecast capacity demand for internet and data bandwidth continues to increase, additional cables may be required.

443. This Plan also recognises that the achievement of energy targets and expansion of offshore renewable energy technologies require sufficient infrastructure to transport electricity from offshore facilities and to share energy between countries in order to facilitate improved supply/demand timelines. The Welsh Government is working with international connectivity providers to diversify electricity supply sources and smooth peaks in supply and demand, especially those from fluctuating renewable energy supplies. The number of interconnectors and total interconnector capacity in the UK is therefore also likely to increase in the Plan area over time.

444. This Plan therefore supports the development of an advanced broadband telecommunications infrastructure throughout Wales and promotes an integrated approach to the provision and renewal of energy and telecommunications infrastructure.

Sector Supporting Policy

CAB_01: Subsea cabling (supporting)

Proposals that facilitate the growth of digital communications networks and/or the optimal distribution of electricity will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

58 MPS Chapter 3, Section 3.7.1.

Sector Supporting Policy Aim

445. The narrative underpinning the **Subsea Cabling Sector Objective** sets out the Welsh Government's conclusion that the number of cables in the Plan area is likely to increase due to the increasing number of businesses depending on accessing international connectivity to operate and the continued upward trend of e-commerce, coupled with the integral role that interconnector and electricity power cables will play in the successful delivery of offshore and marine renewable energy.

446. **Policy CAB_01** therefore recognises the importance of relevant public authorities allowing for the timely expansion of and support for the telecommunications sector (including subsea cables). The policy aims to enable a plan-led approach to the development of the grid in order to provide the most efficient connections, taking account of environmental and economic factors and other users.

447. Relevant public authorities should enable the growth in telecommunication and electricity transport cables necessary to deliver policy objectives, where this is consistent with relevant General Policies and the Safeguarding Policies of this Plan. The sector practice of diversifying cable routes so as to reduce the risk of failure to critical infrastructure should be supported where possible.

448. The Subsea Cable sector can reduce the potential for conflict, and increase co-location and coexistence opportunities, by undertaking burial of the cable, however the nature of activity over buried cables needs to be considered in light of prudent maritime practice and national and international law. Preference should be given to this method of cable installation where there is possibility of significant impact by other activities and where seabed conditions are suitable. Where burial is not achievable or desirable, alternative protection measures may be appropriate (in line with regulatory requirements and industry good practice).

449. Landfall sites and access to them are a key issue for the Subsea Cables sector. When selecting locations for landfall of power and telecommunications cables, developers and relevant public authorities should give consideration to utilising an existing landfall site (where appropriate) and ensure that any proposals are aligned with land planning policies (and the policies of this Plan) to determine compatibility with natural resources and existing or planned uses e.g. with measures to combat flooding and protect coastal areas.

450. There is a general presumption that disused infrastructure should be removed and subsequently taken to land for reuse, recycling, incineration with energy recovery or disposal at a licensed site. Where there are good reasons, exceptions from this general approach can be considered. For example, where cables remain buried at a safe depth below the sea-bed, there may be a case for leaving them in place; environmental impacts and financial costs of removal will be key considerations.

451. Developers and relevant public authorities, along with other relevant organisations such as research institutes and industry bodies, are encouraged to develop and participate in opportunities to address key evidence gaps and better understand opportunities for the sustainable development of the sector.

452. In preparing Subsea Cabling related proposals, developers should apply this Plan's General Polices and the Safeguarding Policies in relation to all sectors covered by the Plan. Developers should refer to each sector chapter for further information on the Safeguarding Policy in relation to the safeguarding of the interests of that sector.

Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim

453. The following Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narrative sets the safeguarding policy and policy principles to be applied by all new proposals from all sectors when considering their potential impact upon the Subsea Cabling sector. Developers and decision makers should also apply the safeguarding policy requirements for all other sectors covered by this Plan, as set by the Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narratives of each sector chapter within the Plan.

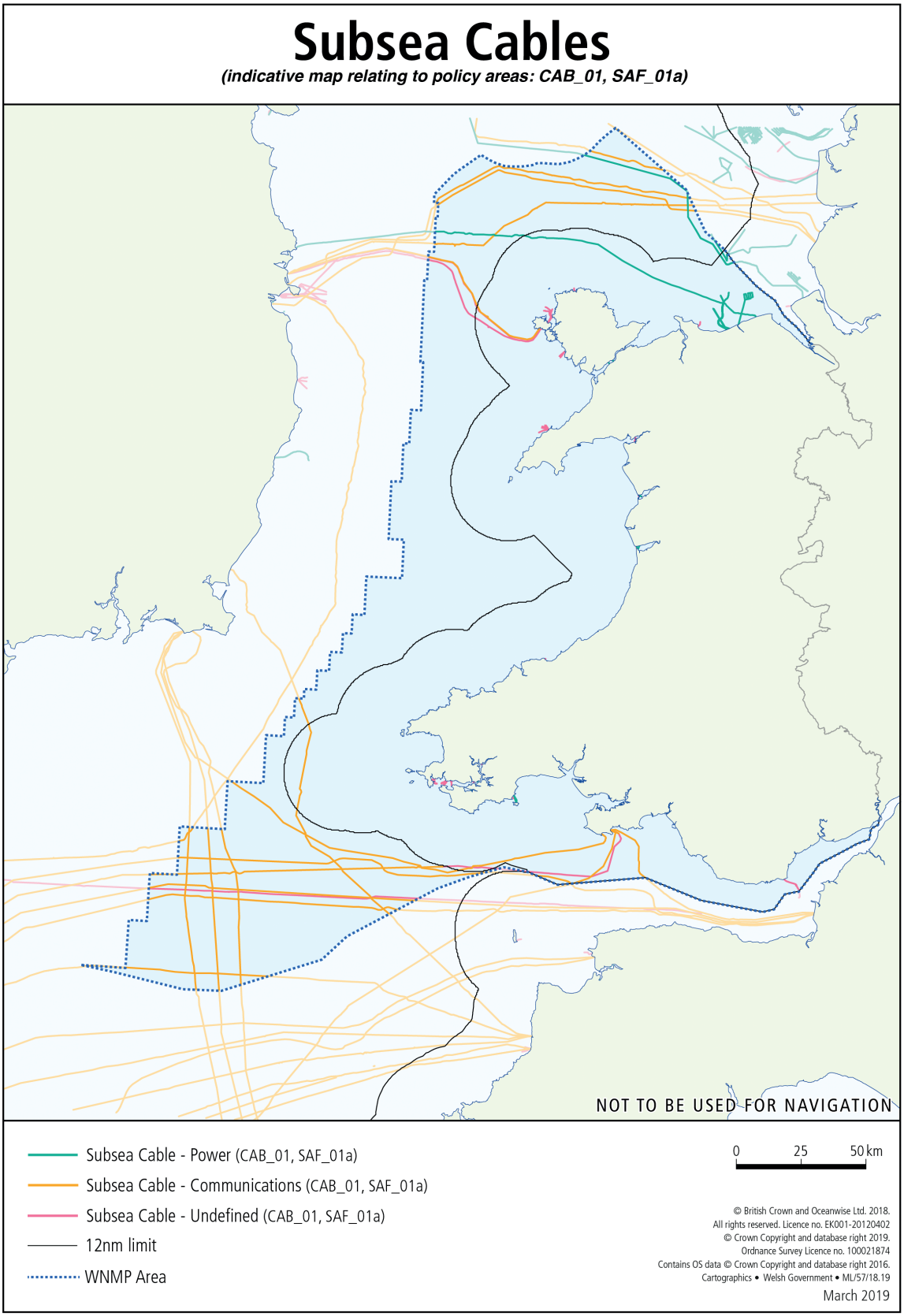
454. **Policy SAF_01 a** applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new Subsea Cabling sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon existing and planned subsea cables and cable landfall sites where a consent, authorisation or lease has been granted or formally applied for. It applies to cable landfall sites and cable routes within the inshore and offshore regions of the Plan area. This includes cable routes which pass through the Plan area but make landfall in neighbouring marine plan areas.

455. This policy recognises the importance of protecting subsea cables, their landfall sites, and the associated land-based infrastructure which will be the subject of local authority planning permission. New development in other sectors (for example competition for space with oil and gas pipelines, aggregates, fishing and shipping), as well as within the cabling industry, increases the risk of potential damage to subsea cables of all types. Physical interactions involving force can damage both the cable and/or contact mechanism, causing economic loss to the operators of both activities, and may risk human safety. Damage to cables is expensive to repair and can cause significant disruption to power and telecommunication distribution.

456. A collaborative and planned approach promotes coexistence and reduces risk. Flexibility in cable route can often adequately address potential adverse interactions. Through the marine planning process and the provision of accurate information as to the location of subsea cables, relevant public authorities should help facilitate the co-ordination of marine activities, improve understanding among relevant industries and the communication of guidelines to ensure both the safety of these installations and safe access to them for maintenance purposes.

457. **Policy SAF_01 a** is the means by which Subsea Cabling sector activity is safeguarded. Therefore, **Policies DEF_01**, **SAF_01 b** and **SAF_02** are not applicable in relation to the safeguarding of Subsea Cabling sector activity.

Figure 20: Subsea cables: Indicative map relating to Policy areas



458. Surface Water and Wastewater Treatment and Disposal (SWW) sector policy is not applicable to the offshore region of the Plan area.

Surface Water and Wastewater Treatment and Disposal (SWW)

Sector Objective

> To safeguard the capacity to safely and effectively treat and discharge surface water runoff and wastewater.

Sector Objective – Context and Rationale

459. The management of surface water run-off and wastewater includes its collection, transport, treatment and disposal. It covers sewers, sewage treatment works, industrial effluent and combined sewer overflows.

460. The MPS asserts that the UK seeks to contribute to sustainable development, including the health and well-being of the community and the protection of the environment, by maintaining and developing a policy and regulatory system which provides modern, high quality management and treatment of surface and waste water.

461. This Plan therefore recognises that the provision of infrastructure (through both terrestrial and marine planning) for the collection, treatment and disposal of waste water, and the effective management and maintenance of this infrastructure, are key activities. The function of the SWW sector is closely aligned with, and is critical to, other sectors that rely upon healthy, clean coastal and estuarine water bodies to support their own activities. In particular, the management of surface water run-off and wastewater, and the frequency of overflows leading to the release of untreated wastewater, play an important role in water quality and maintaining our natural resources in a healthy state.

462. The demand and challenges of wastewater management may increase in the future as a result of:

- population growth creating pressure on the sewage network and treatment for waste water disposal;
- increased tourism and recreation putting more seasonal demand on the sewer network and waste water treatment and disposal;
- urban creep increasing the proportion of the catchment that is impermeable thereby increasing peak-run off events;
- risk of increased diffuse urban and rural pollution from wider catchment areas; and
- climate change impacts.

463. The role of integrated multi-trophic aquaculture systems may be considered in the future as a means of managing nutrient levels in inshore waters. Here shared nutrient flows are used to culture multiple organisms at different trophic levels, thus maximising productivity from available nutrients.

464. Water treatment systems are largely developed in response to regulatory needs (e.g. the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003, changing water quality standards and public health considerations) and to mainly land based factors such as changes in numbers or distribution of people or increased flows in the network (e.g. from greater surface runoff, or composition of discharges, or new chemical compounds). The majority of the SWW sector infrastructure is land based and has been in place since Victorian times.

465. This Plan therefore recognises that decisions concerning the SWW sector will normally be addressed by terrestrial planning, although any infrastructure within the Plan area will require a marine licence. Management of the sector has clear implications for the marine environment and users, and marine processes and activities have the potential to impact on wastewater outfalls. It is therefore important for terrestrial and marine planners to work together closely to ensure the sustainable management of the SWW sector and for any terrestrial planning decisions which may impact upon the marine environment and users to consider this Plan's policies.

466. The location and design of wastewater treatment infrastructure reflects environmental dispersal or dilution capacity, the availability of suitable land and land planning outcomes. Options in marine planning are limited to the extent that they need to recognise the characteristics of the SWW sector and safeguard its effective operation through consideration by other sectors. In the circumstances, it is difficult to predict areas of future development and sector planning must be in large part reactive.

Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim

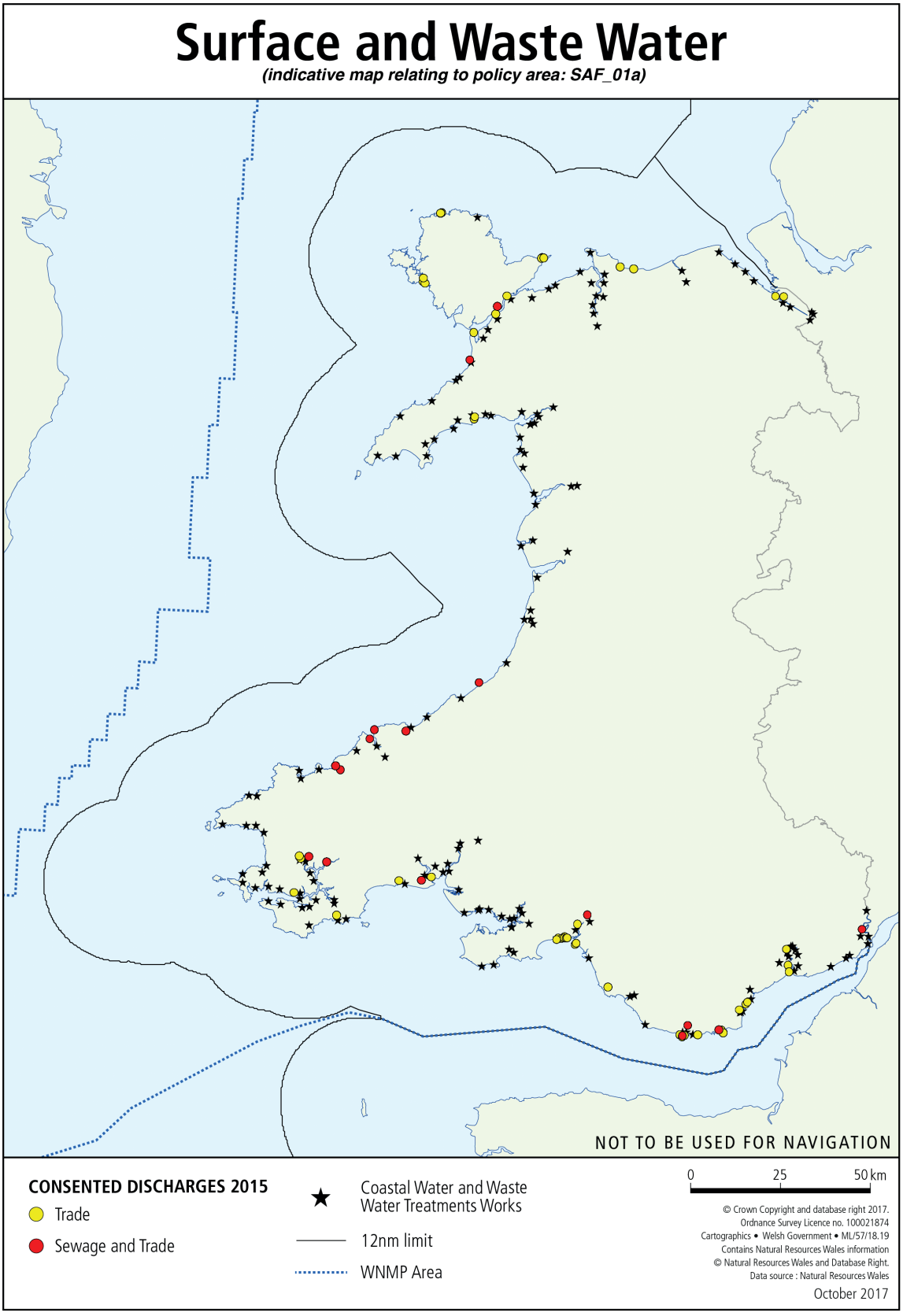
467. The following Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narrative sets the safeguarding policy and policy principles to be applied by all new proposals from all sectors when considering their potential impact upon the SWW sector. Developers and decision makers should also apply the safeguarding policy requirements for all other sectors covered by this Plan, as set by the Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narratives of each sector chapter within the Plan.

468. This Plan recognises that effective surface water runoff and wastewater management has environmental, economic and social benefits that should be safeguarded by protecting the SWW sector from being adversely impacted by other users of the marine environment.

469. **Policy SAF_01 a** therefore applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new SWW sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon existing or planned surface water runoff and wastewater treatment and disposal activities where a consent or authorisation or lease has been granted or formally applied for. This policy recognises the importance of having waste water infrastructure and the work and investment required to develop appropriate sites.

470. **Policy SAF_01 a** is the means by which SWW sector activity is safeguarded. Therefore, **Policies DEF_01**, **SAF_01 b** and **SAF_02** are not applicable in relation to the safeguarding of SWW sector activity.

Figure 21: Surface and Waste Water: Indicative map relating to Policy areas



471. Tourism and Recreation sector policy applies to both the inshore and offshore regions of the Plan area.

Tourism and Recreation

Sector Objective

> To contribute to sustainable development by protecting and promoting access to the coast and improving the quality of the visitor experience thereby increasing Wales' reputation as a world class sustainable marine tourism and recreation destination.

Sector Objective – Context and Rationale

472. In this Plan, recreation means free-time leisure activities largely undertaken in the local environment. Tourism means activities, services and infrastructure associated with visitors and holidaymakers. Tourism activities can also be recreational in nature.

473. Tourism and recreation activity in the Plan area benefits from the high quality, diverse natural environment and cultural distinctiveness that is typical of the Welsh coastline. 70% of the coastline is designated for its environmental quality and in recent years certain activities such as wildlife watching and visiting beaches have increased significantly[59], emphasising the significance of a healthy and resilient marine environment to supporting the further development of this sector. A high proportion of resort beaches have Blue Flag and Resort Seaside Award status while the establishment of the Wales Coast Path, as well as rural cycle and riding routes, has helped to underpin and develop existing tourism and recreation activity.

474. The MPS recognises the significant role tourism and recreation play in the national economy. Meanwhile, this Plan recognises that tourism and recreation is important to Wales' economy and fundamental to the economy of many of our coastal areas; just under half of all full-time jobs associated with the marine and coastal environment are in tourism related activities[60]. The North Wales marine and coastal economy is predominantly, though not exclusively, tourism based; in West Wales, tourism accounts for over a third of direct coastal and marine employment and in South East Wales it accounts for over half of coastal and marine sector direct jobs.

475. Tourism and recreation is often a catalyst for wider economic and local regeneration activity. Spending by tourists can help support local services, shops and community amenities that would not otherwise be viable, enhancing quality of life and creating a greater range of opportunities for all sectors of the community. The tourism and recreation industry can provide entry-level jobs and offers employment opportunities for economically inactive people or other returners to work. Community based initiatives that support tourism and recreation can also act as an entry point for people into the paid workforce.

476. Alongside economic benefits, recreational enjoyment is essential to human well-being, health, development and quality of life. The marine area therefore has a key role to play in supporting our well-being and it is consequently important to consider these wider impacts in addition to the more obvious economic drivers for tourism and recreation development when taking decisions.

59 Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey, NRW, 2015.
60 Valuing our Environment Partnership, 2006.

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477. This Plan identifies the tourism and recreation sector, and diversification of the tourism 'offer', as offering significant development potential and considers this sector to be a strategic priority for marine planning. Specifically, the Plan identifies scope and capacity around Wales to sustainably develop a wide range of coastal and marine tourism and recreation opportunities, particularly higher value, year-round and all-weather opportunities. The Plan also recognises that considerable opportunity exists to increase the volume and value of cruise visits to Wales and acknowledges the importance of recreational angling and recreational boating activity.

478. A range of development types in the marine area have the potential to support further tourism and recreation related development or to enhance established activities and profitability by improving, broadening and diversifying the tourism 'offer'. For example, positive links can be made between tourism and Welsh seafood provision, or between recreational sea angling and the health of fish stocks[61]. There are potential opportunities to base further sustainable coastal tourism activities around the internationally significant marine resource, wildlife and seascapes in Welsh waters including, where managed appropriately, potential for the co-location of MPAs and a wide range of recreational activities.

479. Much of the tourism and recreation activity occurring in the Plan area takes place on the shoreline or within three nautical miles of the coast. Appropriate integration between marine and terrestrial planning is therefore key to support the development of onshore facilities essential to marine recreation, including toilets, car parks and transport links.

Sector Supporting Policy

T&R_01: Tourism and recreation (supporting)

T&R_01 a: Proposals that demonstrate a positive contribution to tourism and recreation opportunities and policy objectives (for the sector) around the Welsh coast will be supported where they contribute to the objectives of this plan. Proposals should comply with the relevant general policies and sector safeguarding policies of this plan and any other relevant considerations.

T&R_01 b: Relevant public authorities and the sector are encouraged, in liaison with other interested parties, to collaborate to understand opportunities for sustainable tourism and recreation around the Welsh coast, including:

a. developing a strategic evidence base to improve understanding of current and potential tourism and recreation activities, including eco-tourism and other low impact activities; and

b. opportunities to define areas of future opportunity for tourism and recreation;

in order to support the sustainable development of the tourism and recreation sector through marine planning.

Sector Supporting Policy Aim

480. The narrative underpinning the **Tourism and Recreation Sector Objective** sets out the significance of this sector to Wales' coastal communities and their economies, together with the Welsh Government's conclusion that significant potential exists to support the further sustainable development of tourism and recreation opportunities, with particular focus on higher value, year-round and all-weather opportunities and the potential offered by the cruise market. **Policy T&R_01 a** therefore aims to support proposals which can make a positive contribution to and maximise the potential for the sustainable development of the sector.

481. Actions that assist in promoting safe access to our seas and coasts and to the health and well-being benefits that our seas and coasts provide to local communities and tourists alike should be

61 **www.cefas.co.uk/cefas-data-hub/dois/sea-angling-2012-economic-value-and-social-benefits-of-angling/.**

strongly supported, where they are consistent with relevant General Policies and the Safeguarding Policies in this Plan. Decision makers should take account of any adverse impacts which a proposal may have for activity in neighbouring marine plan areas and, in line with **Policy Gov_02**, have regard to any applicable policy in any neighbouring marine plan area.

482. The tourism and recreation industry is well-placed to provide important employment opportunities throughout Wales, even in the most sparsely populated and peripheral regions. Initiatives that increase profitability and productivity and support higher earnings and job quality are encouraged, along with initiatives which develop higher value, year-round and all-weather tourism and recreational opportunities.

483. Tourism and recreation activities on our coast and at sea should help boost coastal economies and contribute to a better quality of life for local communities. Proposals should seek to maintain and enhance a quality environment and cultural distinctiveness. Tourism and recreation can be a driving force for the preservation and promotion of these qualities.

484. Proposals are encouraged that improve the quality of the visitor experience by increasing the range, diversity and quality of experience (attractions, accessibility, wildlife and the natural environment, facilities and infrastructure; beauty, friendliness and value for money). Areas that have not traditionally attracted much tourism and recreation activity can be developed to boost local economies; such opportunities are encouraged where they are within the keeping of the character of an area or positively welcomed by local communities.

485. Proposals which support the cruise market, particularly through enabling an increase in the volume and value of cruise visits to Wales, are strongly encouraged. Recreational boating and recreational angling are other important activities with development potential which should be supported wherever possible.

486. Relevant authorities should coordinate work and collaborate on projects in order to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefit of marine-related tourism and recreation. Industry bodies and relevant public authorities are encouraged to identify and promote opportunities to share facilities and infrastructure with other sectors.

487. Unpredictability of future weather patterns in response to climate change will have implications for the sector, although this is generally considered to be beyond the lifetime of this Plan. However, proposals are encouraged to incorporate climate change resilience into their approach.

488. **Policy T&R_01 b** encourages new initiatives and collaborative working to identify opportunities for the sustainable development of tourism and recreation activities and to build the evidence base. This may include identifying potential locations for tourism and recreation activities; better understanding markets and significant constraints; understanding the direct and indirect economic impact of tourism and recreation activities and/or understanding where the sector has strategic importance.

489. A number of Welsh beaches continue to be affected by diffuse pollution. The continued growth in coastal tourism will increase the pressure on the coastal environment and facilities. Understanding the capacity of coastal communities and marine and coastal natural resources to support further development in tourism and recreation will be important to ensure that development is achieved in a sustainable manner. It will also be important to manage potential impacts on the tourism and recreation sector resulting from development in other sectors.

490. In preparing tourism and recreation related proposals, developers should apply this Plan's General Polices and the Safeguarding Policies in relation to all sectors covered by the Plan. Developers should refer to each sector chapter for further information on the Safeguarding Policy in relation to the safeguarding of the interests of that sector.

Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim

491. The following Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narrative sets the safeguarding policy and policy principles to be applied by all new proposals from all sectors when considering their potential impact upon the Tourism and Recreation sector. Developers and decision makers should also apply the safeguarding policy requirements for all other sectors covered by this Plan, as set by the Sector Safeguarding Policy Aim narratives of each sector chapter within the Plan.

492. **Policy SAF_01 b** applies to all proposals from all sectors (including new Tourism and Recreation sector proposals) with the potential to impact upon existing or known planned tourism and recreation activities.

493. This policy recognises the Welsh Government's commitment to supporting the sustainable development of the Tourism and Recreation sector in a way that maximises the potential of our coast and seas in a sustainable way, thereby making an increasing contribution to the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales.

494. By safeguarding existing and known planned Tourism and Recreation sector activity, **Policy SAF_01 b** therefore aims to ensure that proposals that would have a significant adverse effect on the Welsh Government's recreation, sport and tourism objectives are subject to the provisions of this Plan's Safeguarding Policy.

495. Key attractions include Wales' beaches, wildlife, coastal landscape and seascape, distinctive towns and villages and unique culture and heritage[62] [63]. They include National Parks, AONBs and the 870-mile long Wales Coast Path, the only one of its kind anywhere in the world to span the nation's entire coastline. Much of the tourism and recreation activity occurring in the Plan area takes place on or near-shore, typically within three nautical miles of the coast.

496. **Policy SAF_01 b** is the means by which Tourism and Recreation sector activity is safeguarded. Therefore, **Policies DEF_01**, **SAF_01 a** and **SAF_02** are not applicable in relation to the safeguarding of Tourism and Recreation sector activity.

62 Visit Wales – Wales Visitor Survey, 2013.
63 WORS, 2011.

Figure 22(a): Tourism and Recreation - Coastal land use: Indicative map relating to Policy areas

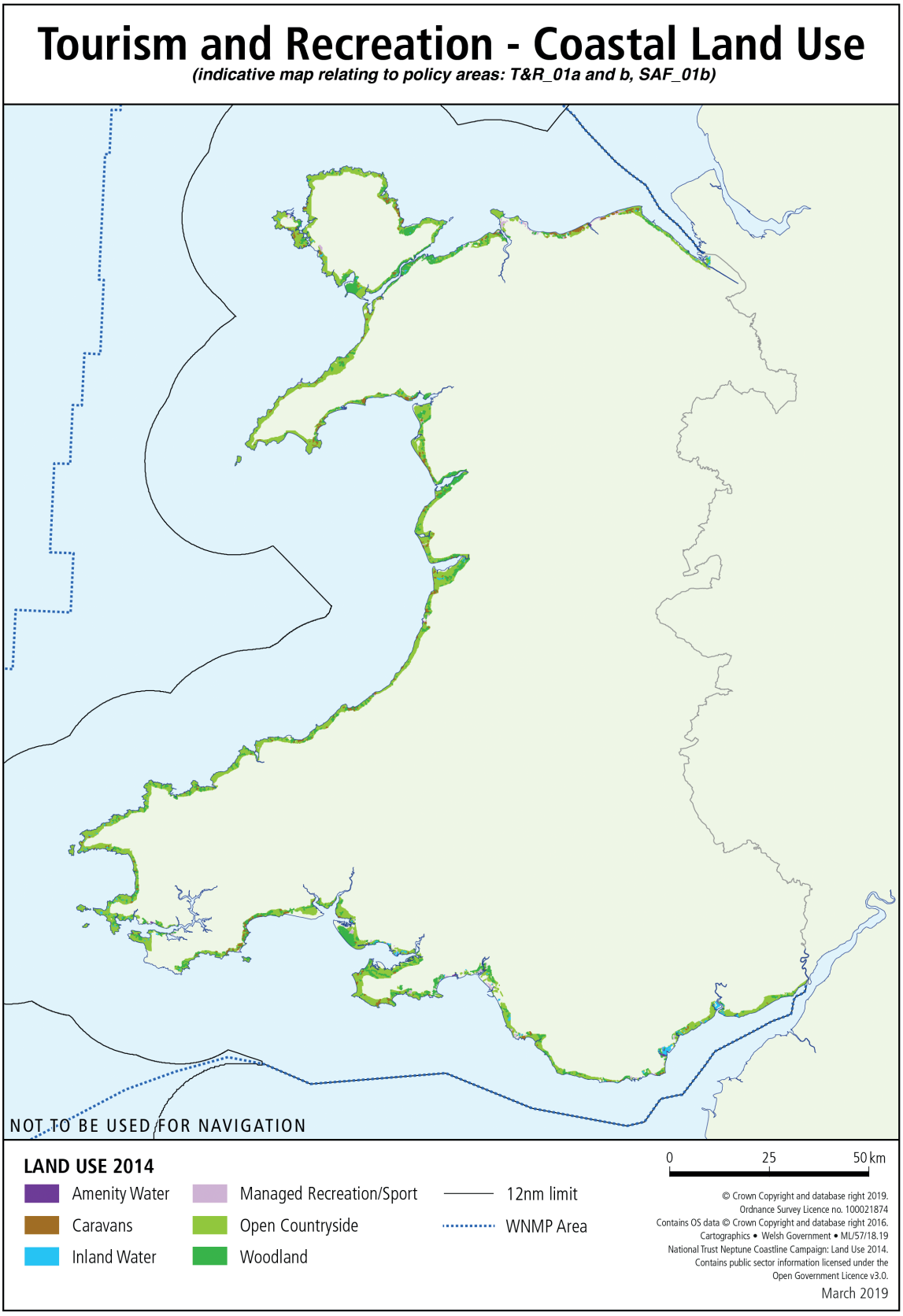


Figure 22(b): Tourism and Recreation – Areas of natural beauty or enjoyment: Indicative map relating to Policy areas

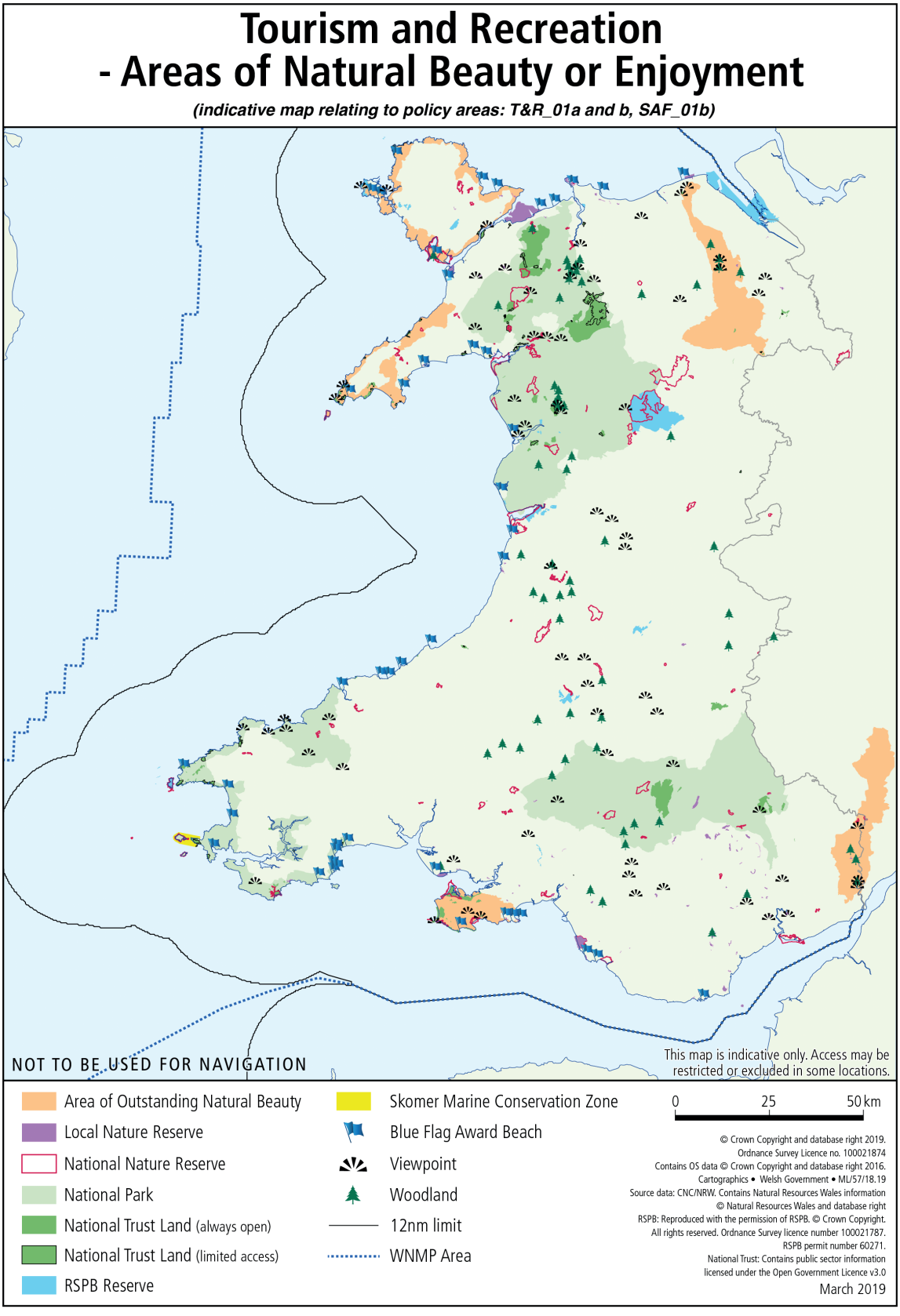


Figure 22(c): Tourism and Recreation – Recreational boating: Indicative map relating to Policy areas

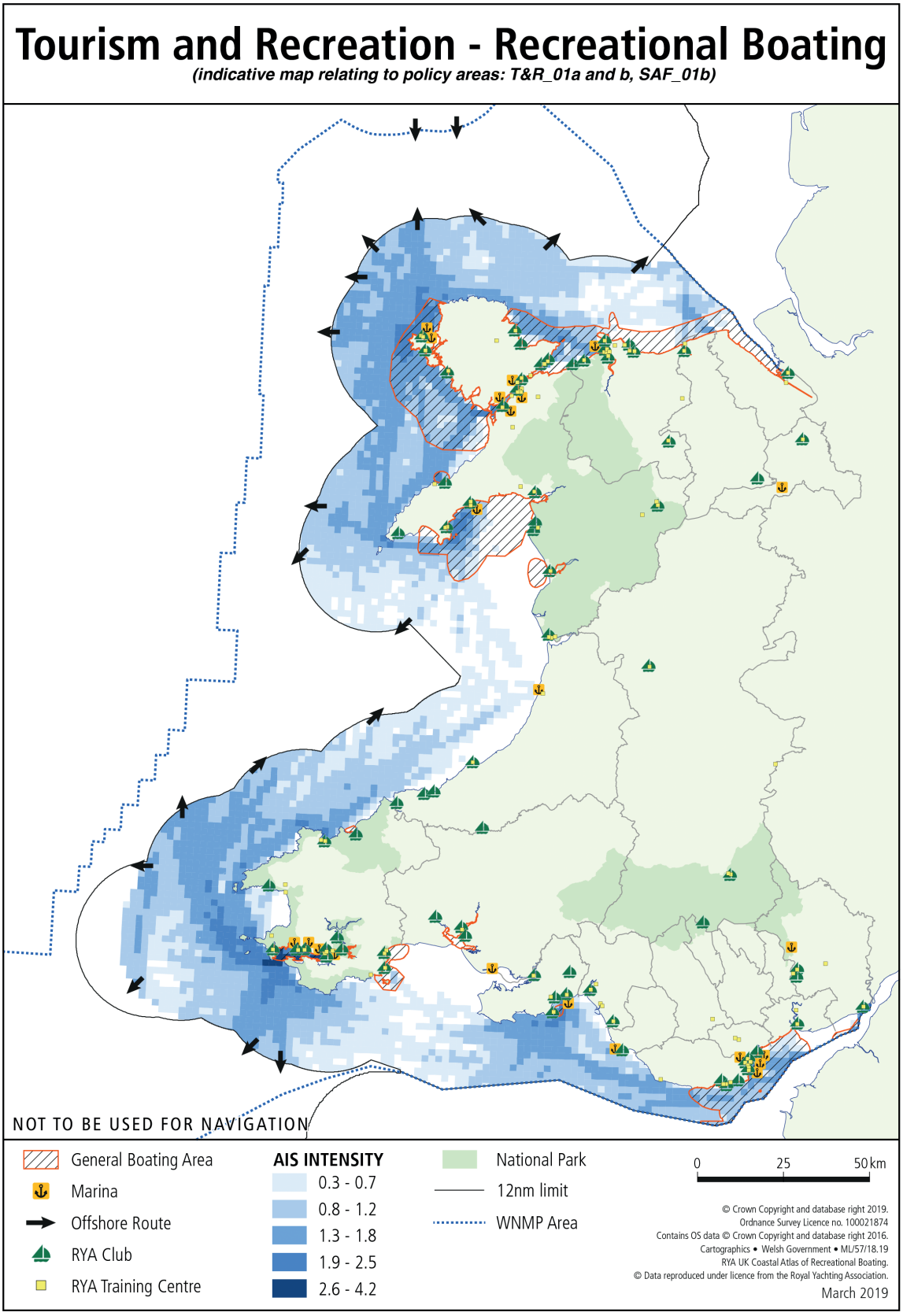
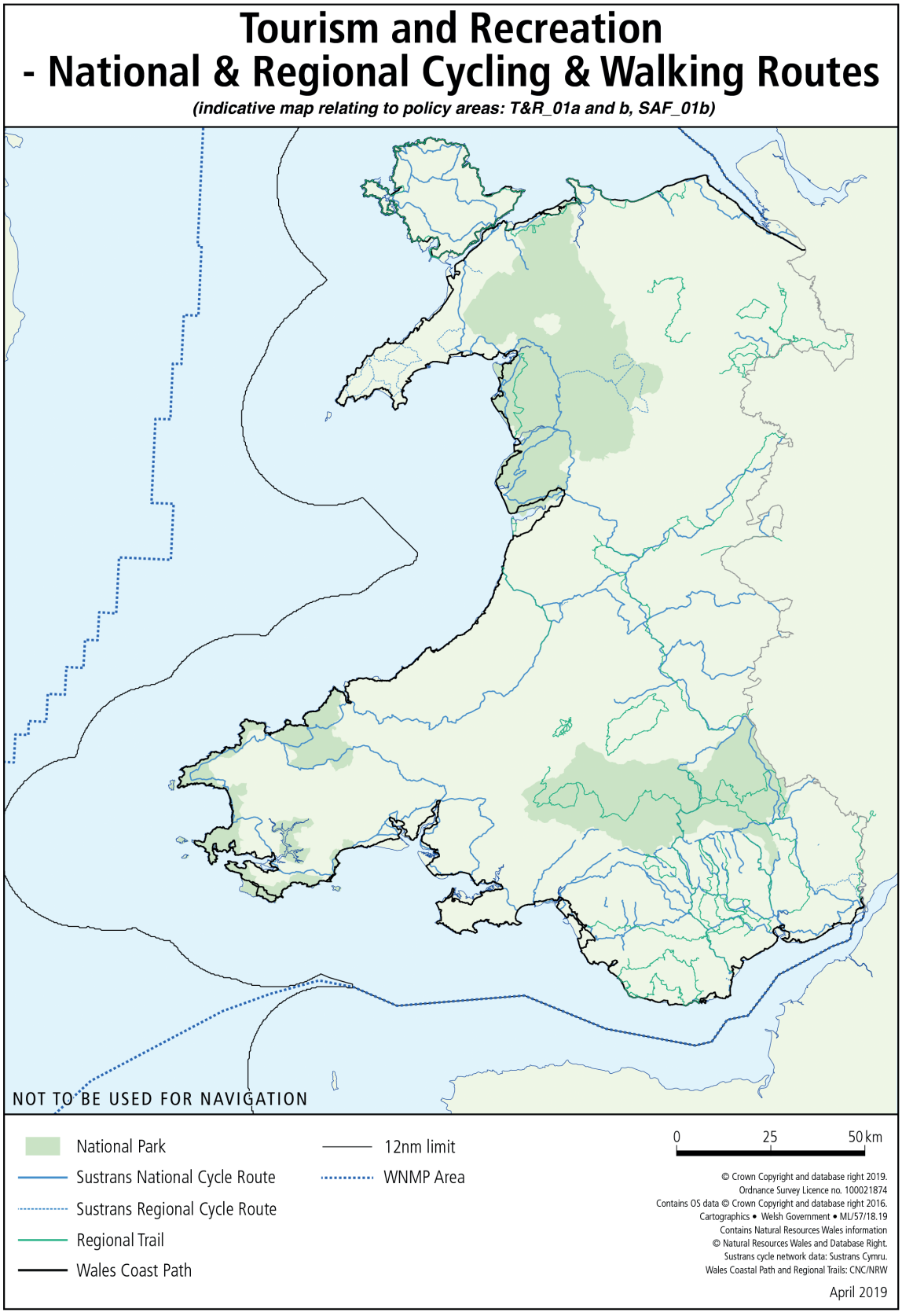


Figure 22(d): Tourism and Recreation – National and regional cycling and walking routes: Indicative map relating to Policy area



Annex 1 – Our approach to marine planning for Wales

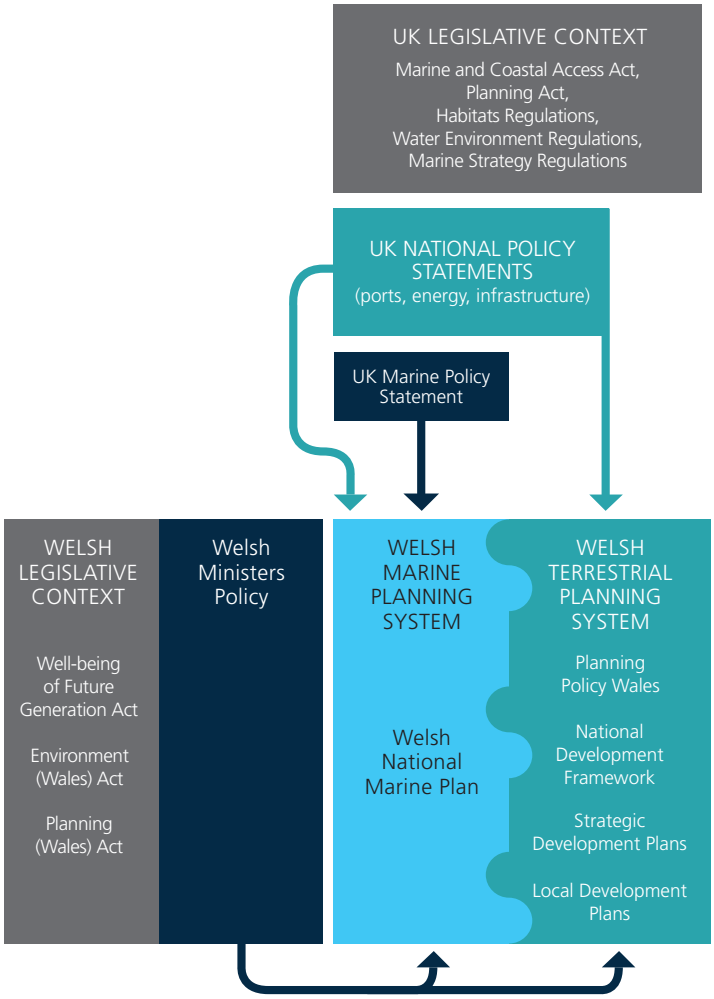
Policy Context

497. The **Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009** (MCAA) provides the framework for marine planning in Wales and across the UK (see Appendix 1). It makes provision for the production of a Marine Policy Statement (MPS) for the UK, sets Welsh Ministers as the marine plan authority for the Welsh inshore and offshore regions, requires the production of marine plans where a MPS is in place (see Appendix 2) and sets out requirements for the Planning process, plan content, implementation, monitoring and review.

498. The UK Government produces **National Policy Statements** (NPSs) under the Planning Act (2008) which set out Government's policy for the development of nationally significant infrastructure for particular sectors (e.g. Energy; Transport; Water; Waste Water and Waste). NPSs provide the framework within which inspectors make their recommendations to the Secretary of State (SoS) with regard to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). NSIPs may be located in or affect the Plan area; relevant decisions on these projects must be taken in accordance with the appropriate NPS where this is in place, and will also have regard to this Plan.

499. There are strong synergies across the requirements of the wide range of legislative instruments, other measures and International commitments of relevance to marine planning. Implementing the policies in this Plan will help support delivery of these broader instruments. Figure 1 sets out the core policy relationships underpinning marine planning in Wales.

Figure 1: Marine planning and wider planning policy context



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500. Our vision that Welsh seas are clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse is consistent with the shared UK administrations' vision (see Appendix 2) and that of the Oslo and Paris Convention (OSPAR) for a 'clean, healthy and biologically diverse North-East Atlantic, used sustainably'.

501. The **UK Marine Policy Statement 2011** (MPS) provides the framework for preparing marine plans and provides the high-level policy context for marine planning, on which this Plan has been developed (Appendix 2):

- The general cross-cutting policies of this Plan have been developed under the five themes of the **High Level Marine Objectives** (HLMOs) described in Chapter 2 of the MPS:
  - Achieving a sustainable marine economy;
  - Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
  - Living within environmental limits;
  - Promoting good governance; and
  - Using sound science responsibly.
- The sector policies of this Plan have been developed under compatible headings of the activities described in Chapter 3 of the MPS:
  - Aggregates;
  - Aquaculture;
  - Defence;
  - Dredging & disposal;
  - Energy – low carbon;
  - Energy – oil & gas;
  - Fisheries;
  - Ports & shipping;
  - Subsea cabling;
  - Surface water and wastewater treatment & disposal;
  - Tourism & recreation.

502. The exception is Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), which have been considered alongside the marine ecosystem components in this Plan as part of the ENV General Policy – Living within Environmental Limits section of the WNMP.

503. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFGA) aims to improve the long-term social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The WFGA covers all of Wales, including the inshore marine planning region, and applies to all devolved policy in this Plan. It requires Welsh Ministers and the public bodies listed in the Act to apply the Sustainable Development (SD) principle in delivering their functions and act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It sets out 5 ways of working, which have guided the development of this Plan.

Table 1: WFGA 5 ways of working

5 ways of working	Marine planning context
Look to the **long term** so we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs;	The Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP) takes a 20-year view and will consider current and future potential trends including recognising the implications of climate change. By championing the sustainable use of the marine environment it will focus on managing activities over the long term.
Take an **integrated approach** by considering all Wales well-being goals;	Marine planning takes account of a wide range of marine policy and delivery areas. Planning supports an integrated approach by presenting a coherent suite of policy that relates to all decisions taken by public authorities that may have an effect upon the Plan area. The Plan contains an integrated set of policies covering all aspects of natural resource management and uses of the Welsh marine environment.
Involve a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them;	The planning process is inclusive and has involved extensive stakeholder engagement. Our Statement of Public Participation (SPP) sets out opportunities for engagement. An initial draft WNMP was shared online for early feedback and refinement, public events have been held to discuss the content of the Plan first hand.
Work with others in a **collaborative** way to find shared sustainable solutions; and	Marine planning involves working collaboratively with a wide range of policy areas and stakeholders. This is being addressed through a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process with input from a wide range of policy areas as well as stakeholders. To help facilitate the production of the WNMP, a Marine Planning Stakeholder Reference Group (MPSRG) has been established.
Understand the root causes of issues to **prevent** them from occurring and examining whether how we currently deploy our resources should change.	Taking an evidence-based approach to policy development and planning is critical to the success of the WNMP. It provides a means to better consider the complexity of the marine environment and apply appropriate interventions to improve its future management. Early engagement with stakeholders has identified a range of challenges and opportunities as well as emerging research and future evidence needs.

504. This Plan and its associated documents support the legislative requirements for sustainable development by setting clear policies for the management of our inshore and offshore marine plan areas. These policies seek to protect the marine environment and its resources, recognise the benefits to society that the environment and its resources provide and promote the sustainable use and development of those resources. The suite of policies in this Plan therefore recognise that:

- The environmental, social, cultural and economic characteristics of an area are critical components defining their resilience and scope for adaptation. Safeguarding people, places and ecosystems requires careful management often resulting in difficult choices in order to optimise the health and well-being of communities and the environment; and
- Development and use of marine resources are necessary for economic and social development, including food, trade, energy, leisure, jobs, homes, building materials and communications. Promoting our economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being is a critical to achieving sustainable development and blue growth.

505. In addition to the 5 ways of working the WFGA establishes 7 well-being goals to ensure that all public bodies are working towards the same vision of a sustainable Wales. This Plan has been developed to optimise the marine contribution towards achievement of the well-being goals.

Table 2: WFGA 7 well-being goals

Well-being goal	How marine planning contributes	Key policies and aspects of marine planning
A prosperous Wales	Supporting blue growth, skill development, employment opportunities and wealth generation. Support for climate change adaptation and mitigation, including the transition to a low carbon economy.	GEN_01; GOV_02; All Sector policies supporting sustainable growth ECON_01 & 02 SOC_08, 09, 10 & 11 ELC_01, 02, 03, 04 & 07
A resilient Wales	Supporting the conservation and recovery of marine biodiversity and marine ecosystems. Recognising that healthy ecosystems underpin social and economic resilience.	ENV_01, 02, 03, 05, 06 & 07 ECON_01 & 02 SOC-09
A healthier Wales	Recognising that clean, healthy seas provide a strong basis for people's physical and mental well-being. Support for access and opportunities to enhance the marine area for multiple benefits. Promoting opportunities for recreational activities.	SOC_01, 02, 05, 07, 09 T&R_01
A more equal Wales	Balancing the needs and interests of all our industries and communities. Use open, transparent planning and data sharing.	All General and Sector policies Wales' Marine Evidence Report (WMER) Wales Marine Planning Portal
A Wales of cohesive communities	Recognising the importance of coastal communities and the contribution that the marine areas makes to society.	SOC_02, 04, 05 & 07. T&R_01
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Protecting and promoting our marine culture and heritage. Supporting opportunities to contribute to Welsh culture and language.	SOC_01, 02, 04, 05, 06, 07 ECON_01 T&R_01
A globally responsible Wales	Supporting compliance with relevant national and international legislation Integrate with other relevant terrestrial and marine planning regimes. Supporting action to address climate change.	All General policies

506. The MPS includes a requirement to apply the ecosystem approach to marine planning. The ecosystem approach establishes a number of principles to help ensure sustainable development (see Appendix 3). The key advantages of taking an ecosystem approach in this Plan are:

- Integration of ecological, economic, cultural and social considerations within a single framework helping to identify potential conflicts and interactions from the outset;
- Recognition that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of ecosystems, and should be involved in application of an ecosystem approach; and
- Emphasis on flexible and integrated methods, and adaptive management.

507. The UK Marine Strategy underpins an ecosystem approach at a UK level (as does the OSPAR Convention at the North-East Atlantic level), requiring consideration of marine ecosystems and the management of human pressures, including across administrative boundaries. In Wales, the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) framework provided by the Environment (Wales) Act 2015 provides an additional statutory focus for implementing the ecosystem approach in Wales through this Plan.

508. The principles of SMNR (in alignment with the well-being goals and ways of working) have been applied throughout the marine planning process in Wales (Table 3).

Table 3: Principles of sustainable management of natural resources applied in the WNMP

Adaptive management	Marine planning is an adaptive process, monitoring and reporting on the effect of the Plan will support an adaptive approach. We have adopted an inclusive approach to ensure that (as far as possible) the full range of issues for the Welsh plan areas for the lifetime of the Plan are identified. This presents challenges for certain issues where the evidence base or the scale of impact are uncertain but is an important part of the Planning process to ensure that interested parties can prepare to take informed decisions and are able to adapt processes, resources, technologies and evidence accordingly. The need to monitor and report on the WNMP (and amend where necessary) is a legislative requirement. Monitoring can consider all aspects of the Plan, and lead to changes in policy where objectives are not being met.
Scale	Marine planning sets spatial (and temporal) policy; individual policies within the WNMP are tailored to the appropriate scale, reflecting the anticipated extent of current and future potential activity and the distribution of natural resources. Whilst the Marine Plan sets an over-arching framework, management of the marine environment already occurs at a variety of different scales across Welsh waters. The development of the Plan is set at the level of the Plan area as a whole but policies are applied at the appropriate spatial scale (e.g. to MPAs or Strategic Resource Areas (SRAs)). The timescale for delivery of the vision for the WNMP will be 20 years. The Plan will be reviewed on a three year cycle and amended if necessary. The UK Marine Strategy sets Ecosystem Objectives in relation to the achievement of Good Environmental Status against a set of descriptors. Achievement of these objectives is a focus for the marine plan.

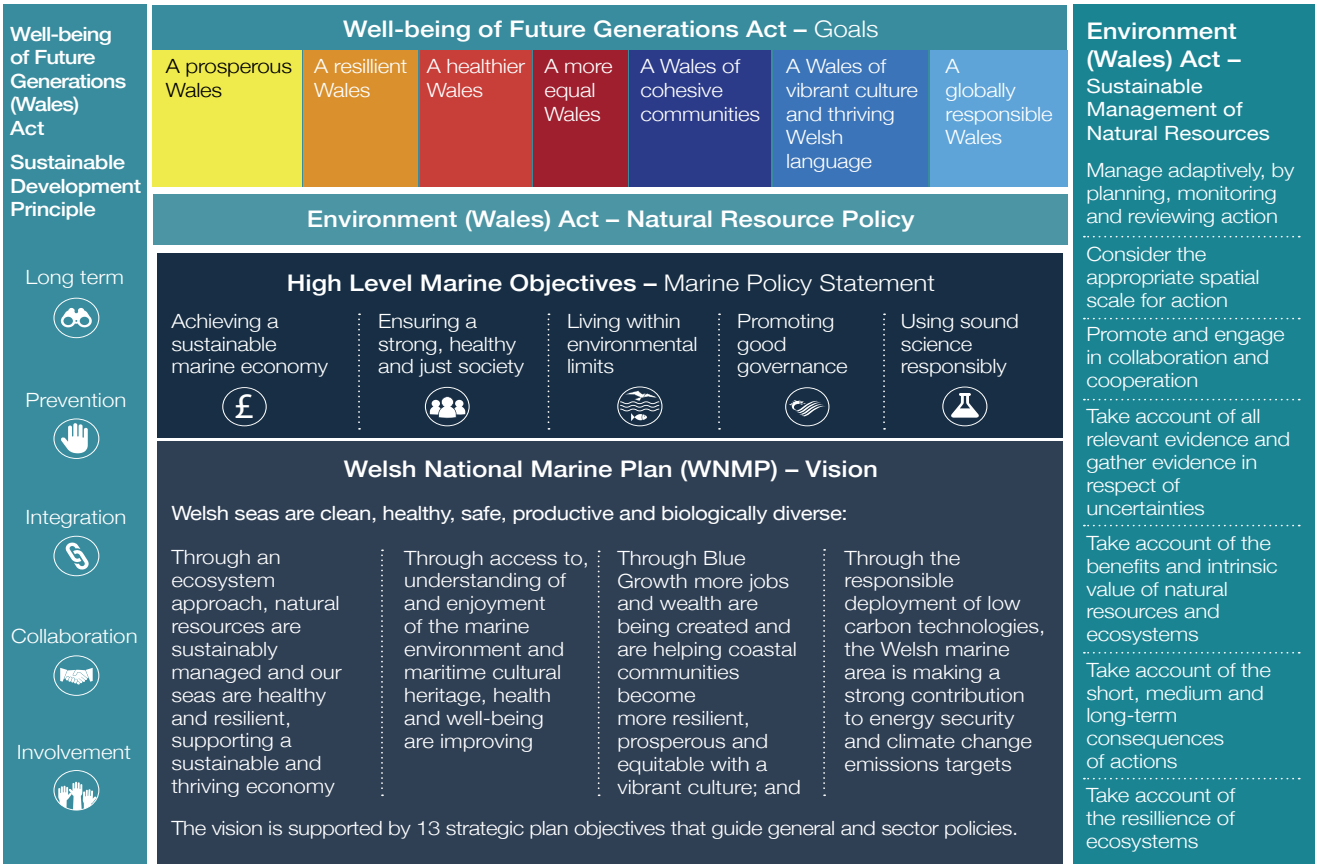
Collaboration and engagement	Marine planning is based upon a collaborative approach. Plan policies encourage sector to sector engagement at early stages of project development and ensure consideration of other relevant plans and policies in decision-making. Working with our MPSRG has greatly enhanced the development of this Plan.
Public participation	Our SPP sets out how and when the public can engage in the Planning process. We have engaged with the public through a series of local events, targeted conferences and formal consultations and have adapted the style and content of this Plan as a consequence of this engagement.
Evidence	All relevant evidence has been compiled and shared, initially through the Strategic Scoping Exercise (SSE) and published in the Wales Marine Evidence Report (WMER), which is being kept under review and updated to ensure that this Plan is based on sound evidence. Key uncertainties and evidence gaps are identified as part of the Planning process.
Multiple benefits	Plan policies recognise the intrinsic value of natural resources and ecosystems. Application of the well-being goals and the 5 ways of working in this Plan promotes equitable benefits to our environment, society, economy and culture. Optimising economic growth is a key objective of the MPS, however, the Planning process in Wales aims to optimise economic, environmental, cultural and social benefits. Plan sector policies focus on highlighting future opportunities, noting the statutory requirements for developments to take account of ecosystem characteristics and status.
Long term	Marine planning considers consequences over the short, medium and long-term. The plans Sustainability Appraisal (SA) sets out consequences of Plan policies and considers potential positive and negative effects of Plan policies on adjacent and other ecosystems. Plan effectiveness is measured through monitoring and evaluation. The MPS and HLMO set out a consistent framework for the management of marine ecosystems across UK waters. The planning process includes cross-border engagement. There is a requirement for all decision makers (including in the terrestrial context) to take decisions in line with marine plans and marine licensing decisions must also be taken in line with relevant terrestrial plans. This encourages consideration of impacts of marine and terrestrial plans on adjacent areas.
Preventative action	Marine planning reinforces the need to take action to prevent damage to ecosystems. The Plan includes specific policies to protect marine ecosystems, including MPAs, covering issues such as air quality, water quality, underwater noise, invasive non-native species and marine litter. The SA considers potential positive and negative effects on ecosystem service delivery, including cumulative effects. This includes specific limits where possible but where there is a lack of defined limits or data, assessment will be qualitative. The development of marine planning, and the collation of spatial data to underpin planning, is an important opportunity to consider cumulative impacts more effectively to inform decisions on the levels of use that are compatible with sustainable use of natural resources.

Building resilience	Achieved through Plan policies on ecosystem resilience, state of the environment, cumulative effects, climate change, sustainable development and support for a coherent network of MPAs. The SA for the WNMP takes into account impacts on structure and function, and on ecosystem service delivery, embedded in HLMOs, Plan vision and objectives and General Policies. The Plan has been developed in such a way that understanding the interactions between different uses of the marine resources and the wider impacts of this on structure and functioning are considered. The planning process seeks to identify evidence gaps as a way to inform future research priorities and this will inform better decision making in the future.

509. In addition to these legislative drivers the Programme for Government: Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021 outlines the commitments we will deliver to drive improvement and make a difference to the lives of everyone in Wales and as such forms a critical consideration in decision-making. Prosperity for All: the national strategy places the key commitments of Taking Wales Forward in a long-term context, setting out how they fit with the work of the wider Welsh public service to lay the foundations for achieving prosperity for all. The strategy should be read alongside the Well-Being Statement 2017, which sets out the Welsh Government's revised well-being objectives.

510. Figure 2 illustrates the integration of the core policy instruments that have shaped this Plan.

Figure 2: Marine planning policy context



Integration with other planning regimes

511. Decisions relating to both terrestrial and marine areas can have an effect over a considerable distance, and most activities in the marine environment also have an onshore component or implication (and vice versa). Effective management of marine areas therefore requires the integration of marine plans both with adjacent marine plans and adjacent terrestrial plans, to minimise the risk of decisions in one area having adverse impacts in another.

512. This Plan extends up to the level of mean high water spring tides and the waters of every estuary, river or channel, so far as the tide flows at mean high water spring tide. In comparison, land-use planning boundaries generally extend to mean low water spring tides. This Plan therefore overlaps physically with terrestrial plans, helping to facilitate integration between land and sea planning and management.

513. Delivering marine planning for Wales involves working with other administrations and stakeholders to ensure that this Plan operates smoothly and effectively across administrative borders. This is particularly important for the cross-border estuaries of the Dee and the Severn and more widely across the Irish Sea.

514. Marine ecosystems function at a range of scales and often work across administrative boundaries. Recognising and planning for the use of marine natural resources as part of wider ecosystem management is an important aspect of marine planning.

515. Co-ordination involves regular liaison and engagement, planning for activities that occur across boundaries and sharing relevant evidence. As planning develops across the UK and beyond, opportunities will be taken to increasingly join up planning practice, particularly in our cross-border areas. Welsh Government will work closely with neighbouring marine plan authorities and put in place, where appropriate, joint working arrangements to support collaboration.

516. The shared marine evidence base collected by a range of monitoring programmes under the UK Marine Monitoring and Assessment Strategy (UKMMAS) will help with the co-ordination of cross border marine planning. At the local level, we will develop and maintain a marine planning evidence base for our shared cross border areas.

517. In developing this Plan we have engaged with the relevant land-sea planning and neighbouring marine planning authorities, through regular dialogue and formal consultation. Our work on implementation of the policies, includes:

- Engagement with a network of planners from the Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man, Northern Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales focusing on cross-border matters, including:
  - Status updates on the development and implementation of marine plans in the respective administrations;
  - Discussion of the approaches to marine planning applied by the respective administrations;
  - Discussion of issues and options for transboundary cooperation.
- To facilitate practical implementation of this Plan we have established the Marine Planning Decision Makers Group (MPDMG) with relevant public authorities to:
  - Identify issues arising from policy implementation and assist in developing mechanisms to address them;
  - Facilitate authorisation decisions that are effective, efficient, consistent, proportionate and timely;

- consider effectiveness of guidance and identify areas where further guidance might be required;
- Support monitoring and reporting requirements.

518. The MCAA requires that marine plan authorities must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the marine plan is compatible with plans in the land-use planning system. There is also a requirement when preparing a marine plan to have regard to any other plan prepared by a public or local authority. Examples of statutory plans drawn up by public bodies that are of relevance to this Plan include:

- River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003;
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plans;
- National Park Management Plans;
- Management schemes for European Marine Sites; and
- Plans to contribute to well-being under the WFGA.

There are also non-statutory plans and strategies drawn up by public authorities which may have relevance, including:

- Shoreline Management Plans;
- Estuary Management Plans (e.g. Severn Estuary Management Plan);
- Coastal Habitat Management Plans;
- Heritage Coast Plans;
- Sector specific management plans (e.g. offshore energy plans and Strategic Environmental Assessment, port authority plans); and
- Coastal regeneration strategies.

519. We have evaluated key statutory and non-statutory plans produced by public and local authorities of relevance to this Plan to identify which policies are of particular marine relevance. Certain plans may be material considerations to which decision-makers must have regard. Other non-statutory documents do not carry the same weight but are nonetheless important. The documents assessed include:

- Terrestrial development plans (adopted and emerging) for Welsh coastal Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and for LPAs in England adjoining the WNMP area;
- Shoreline management Plans (four affecting Wales, plus North Devon & Somerset SMP2);
- River basin management plans (three); and
- National park (Snowdonia; Pembrokeshire) and AONB plans (Gower; Anglesey).

The policies within relevant plans were evaluated according to:

- their explicit or implicit relevance to the marine/coastal environment;
- whether or not these promote/restrict coastal/marine sectors; and
- the spatial extent of the policies, where possible to evaluate.

520. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the national land-use planning policy document for Wales. It is used by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to inform policies and land-use allocations in Local Development Plans (LDPs) and it is a material consideration for decision makers in determining individual planning applications. PPW sets out the land use policies of the Welsh Government and provides the context for land use planning in Wales, reflecting the requirements of the WFGA.

521. The Welsh Government Planning Directorate are working on the production of a National Development Framework (NDF), scheduled for publication in 2020, which will set out the 20-year land-use framework for Wales (replacing the 2008 Wales Spatial Plan). The NDF will:

- set out where nationally important growth and infrastructure is needed and how the Planning system – nationally, regionally and locally – can deliver it;
- provide direction for Strategic and Local Development Plans and support the determination of Developments of National Significance;
- sit alongside PPW, which sets out Welsh Government's planning policies and provides the context for land-use planning; and
- support national economic, transport, environmental, housing, energy, cultural and marine strategies and ensure they can be delivered through the Planning system.

522. Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) will allow issues that cut across a number of local planning authorities to be considered and planned for in an integrated and comprehensive way. At a local level, planning authorities have a statutory duty to prepare a local development plan and keep it under review.

523. The policies within these documents were evaluated according to:

- their explicit or implicit relevance to the marine/coastal environment;
- whether or not these promote/restrict coastal/marine sectors; and
- the spatial extent of the policies, where possible to evaluate.

524. Relevant plans and policies were taken into consideration during the policy development for this Plan. In developing and implementing this Plan we are contributing to more consistent and co-ordinated decision making. Alignment between marine and terrestrial planning is a core focus and is being achieved through, for example:

- consistency between marine and terrestrial policy documents and guidance, notably the evolving NDF, revisions to PPW and relevant Technical Advice Notes;
- liaison between respective planning authorities;
- sharing the evidence base and data so as to support consistency in plan making and decisions.

525. This Plan has been developed to ensure it is compatible with related marine plans for neighbouring marine plan areas and with relevant terrestrial plans, as defined by MCAA Schedule 6. National and local terrestrial planning authorities and neighbouring marine plan authorities have played a key role in developing this Plan and have therefore helped ensure that this Plan is compatible with and has regard to other relevant marine and terrestrial plans. This Plan sits alongside and interacts with other relevant marine and terrestrial planning regimes as well as other planning and management processes that relate to the coast and seas around Wales and therefore makes an important contribution to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) (see Appendix 4). To ensure consistency and compatibility in decision making, this Plan requires planning authorities to take reasonable steps to encourage coherence of Plan policies.

526. As required by the MPS we are committed to managing coastal areas and the activities taking place within them, in an integrated and holistic way in line with ICZM principles[64]. This recognises the need for join up across land and sea to develop complementary proposals and plans at the coast. The development of this Plan to implement the principles of ICZM is described in Appendix 4. The requirement to take an ecosystem approach

64 ICZM recommendation (2002).

(Appendix 3) in marine planning supports this, given that both approaches recognise the inherently dynamic nature of ecosystems. It promotes a long-term, holistic, adaptive and flexible approach to sustainable natural resource management. This Plan includes policies to help ensure such integration.

527. This Plan provides the policy framework for decisions related to the management of Welsh seas. It recognises that certain sectors may also require focussed sectoral marine planning in order to identify future opportunities and provide guidance to industry on where to focus investment. Within this Plan's sector chapters, supporting policies encourage further work between relevant authorities to undertake sectoral marine planning in order to contribute to better understanding of future opportunities (see the section on SRAs in the Introduction to this Plan).

Welsh marine planning process

528. The marine planning process involves a number of steps: evidence gathering, identification of issues and opportunities, policy development, plan implementation, monitoring and review, supported by ongoing stakeholder engagement and impact assessments. The cyclical marine planning process is set out in Figure 3.

Figure 3: The marine planning process

529. The planning process is iterative, and future plans will be developed using experience and understanding gained from this first marine planning process, incorporating the outputs of any sectoral marine planning and providing a greater level of spatial prescription where appropriate.

Stakeholder engagement

530. A wide range of stakeholders play an important role in, or have an interest in, the management of our seas. The Welsh Government is committed to effective and meaningful engagement to support both the development and implementation of plans and policies. Close partnership working, through a collaborative and inclusive approach, is essential to delivering and implementing marine planning for Wales.

531. In accordance with the MCAA, we published a SPP in 2014. This set out our intentions to engage widely in developing this Plan. We have engaged with a broad range of stakeholders throughout the planning process; this engagement has proved crucial to the shaping of the Plan.

532. Continued engagement and collaboration will be critical to plan implementation and we will continue to work with stakeholders and decision makers to support the delivery of this Plan post adoption.

Gathering and sharing evidence (evidence-based planning)

533. The marine planning process involves bringing together, interpreting and sharing evidence and making sure that we use it to best support decisions on the sustainable development of our seas. In accordance with the MPS this Plan is based on the best available evidence and is designed to support evidence-based decision-making.

534. A Strategic Scoping Exercise (SSE) collated relevant evidence relating to our marine natural resources and the uses that we currently make of them in the context of marine planning. The SSE was informed by two main sources: Charting Progress 2 (2010), a comprehensive report of UK marine research and monitoring, and the UK Marine Strategy Part One which includes an assessment of the status of UK seas, an economic and social analysis of their use and the predominant pressures and impacts associated with them.

535. The Welsh marine evidence base of relevance to marine planning is set out in the WMER 2015 and spatial data is available on the Wales Marine Planning portal (on the Welsh Government website). An update to the WMER 2015 is published alongside this Plan. In addition, under the Environment (Wales) Act, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has published the first State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR). SoNaRR draws on the WMER and sets out the current state of natural resources in Wales and the extent to which they are being sustainably managed.

536. This evidence, coupled with the relevant policy context, has been used to help identify key issues for marine planning in Wales and has shaped the policies set out in this Plan.

Plan monitoring, reporting and review

537. Monitoring and evaluation is a critical important step in the Planning process to ensure that the Plan and its policies are effectively contributing to achieving the Plan's objectives and Wales' well-being goals.

538. Much marine monitoring and reporting already occurs across the UK, for example as required by the Marine Strategy Part Two: UK marine monitoring programmes.

539. The MCAA requires marine plan authorities to review and report at least every three years on the effects of policies in their plan and their effectiveness at securing the Plan objectives.

540. In accordance with the MCAA, we will publish at least every six years (until 1 Jan 2030), a report on the preparation, adoption and amendment of the WNMP. At least every three years, a report will be produced on the effects of the policies in the marine plan and the effectiveness of those policies in securing the Plan's objectives.

541. The planning process is iterative; in accordance with the MCAA, future plans will be developed using experience and understanding gained from previous planning processes.

542. The marine planning related evidence base will also be periodically reviewed and updated as part of the wider marine planning process.

Appendix 1 – Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009)

Section 49 of the MCAA identifies the Welsh inshore and offshore marine planning regions (defined in section 322). Section 50 identifies Welsh Ministers as the marine planning authority for these inshore and offshore regions.

Section 51 of the MCAA makes provision for Marine Plans to be prepared and adopted in accordance with Schedule 6 of the Act, stating that marine plans:

- must be in conformity with the MPS which governs marine planning (see Appendix 2);
- must state whether it includes provision relating to retained functions and section 59 and Schedule 6 paragraph 15(2) states that such plans should be adopted with the agreement of the Secretary of State (SoS);
- if to any extent a stated policy conflicts with any other statement or information in the plan, that conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy;
- comes into effect when it has been published by the marine plan authority that prepared and adopted it.

Section 52 makes provision for amendment of marine plans (from time to time) and section 53 makes provision for withdrawal of marine plans.

Section 54 places a duty on the marine plan authority to keep relevant matters under review, including:

- the physical, environmental, social, cultural (including historic and archaeological) and economic characteristics of the authority's region and of the living resources which the region supports;
- the purposes for which any part of the region is used;
- the communications, energy and transport systems of the region; and
- any other considerations which may be expected to affect these matters, including:
  - any changes which could reasonably be expected to occur in relation to any such matter;
  - the effect that any such changes may have in relation to the sustainable development of the region, its natural resources, or the living resources dependent on the region.

Section 58 relates to decisions affected by marine policy documents (i.e. the MPS and marine plans) stating that:

- a public authority must take any authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with the appropriate marine policy documents, unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise (and the public authority must state its reasons);
- a public authority must have regard to the appropriate marine policy documents in taking any decision which relates to the exercise of any function capable of affecting the whole or any part of the UK marine area which is not an authorisation or enforcement decision;
- under the Planning Act (2008) matters to which Panel or Council must have regard in deciding application for order granting development consent includes the appropriate marine policy documents.

Section 61 makes provision for the monitoring of, and periodic reporting on, implementation, creating a duty to:

- keep certain matters under review for so long as the Plan is in effect;
- prepare and publish reports at intervals of not more than three years;
- prepare and publish at intervals not more than six years a report on:
  - any Marine Plan prepared and adopted;
  - intentions for their amendment;
  - intentions for the preparation and adoption of any further Marine Plans.

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From time to time the marine plan authority must prepare and publish reports on:

- the effects of the policies in the Marine Plan;
- the effectiveness of these policies in securing the objectives for which the Marine Plan was prepared and adopted;
- progress made towards securing the objectives; and
- progress made towards securing the objectives of the MPS.

Schedule 6 of the MCAA sets out the requirements for marine plan preparation and adoption. The marine plan authority must give notice of its intent to prepare a marine plan to the SoS; any marine plan authority in an adjacent area; any responsible regional authorities; any local planning authority. Where a marine plan authority gives notice to the SoS it should state: whether there is an intention to include provision relating to retained functions in the Plan; if the Plan is to not be in conformity with the MPS; and keep the SoS informed of any changes.

In preparing or amending a marine plan a marine plan authority must take all reasonable steps to secure that the Plan is compatible with: the marine plans for any marine plan area and the relevant Planning Act plan (where these are adjacent, overlapping or affected by). In Wales, the relevant Planning Act plans are the development plan (under section 38(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and the Wales Spatial Plan (under section 60 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004)[65].

Before preparing a marine plan, the Plan authority must prepare and publish a SPP, stating the mechanisms for engaging with interested parties during the Planning process. The SPP should include a map of the area, details of any retained functions to be included; invite representations from interested parties; a timetable (for the preparation and publication of the consultation draft; representations on the consultation draft; consideration of representations; adoption and publication of the Plan). The SPP can make provision for public meetings and must be kept under review (and must be revised if the marine plan authority considers it necessary or expedient). Any revision of the SPP must be published.

A marine plan authority may seek advice or assistance from any body or person in relation to any matter in which that body or person has particular expertise. The marine plan authority may convene groups of interested parties to facilitate development or consultation of the Plan.

Matters to which the marine plan authority is to have regard, include:

- requirement for a marine plan to be in conformity with the MPS (unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise);
- duties securing compatibility with marine plans or Planning Act plans;
- the effects which any proposal in the Plan is likely to have on any marine plan area;
- the results of the review under section 54 of MCAA;
- the SPP;
- any representations;
- any advice;
- any other public or local authority plan relating to the management of the sea, coasts or their resources;
- powers and duties of the Crown Estate Commissioners.

65 The Wales Spatial Plan will be replaced by the forthcoming National Development Framework (NDF), which is being prepared under the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.

The marine plan authority must carry out an appraisal of the sustainability of its proposals. The marine plan authority may only proceed if it considers the results of the SA indicate that it is appropriate to do so. The marine plan authority must publish a report of the results of the SA (alongside the consultation draft).

The marine plan authority must publish a draft containing its proposals for inclusion in the Plan. If the consultation draft contains retained functions it may only be published with the agreement of the SoS. The consultation draft must be published in such a manner as the Plan authority considers appropriate, ensuring it is brought to the attention of interested parties. Any person may make representation about the consultation draft in accordance with the SPP. The marine plan authority must consider representations in the course of setting the text of the marine plan for adoption and publication.

A marine plan authority which has published a consultation draft must consider appointing an independent person to investigate the proposals in the draft and to report on them. In deciding whether to appoint such a person the marine plan authority must have regard to any representations received and the extent to which matters contained within representations have not been resolved. Any person appointed must make recommendations and give reasons. The marine plan authority must publish the independent investigation report. A marine plan authority setting the text of a marine plan for adoption and publication must have regard to any recommendations made by the independent investigation and the reasons for the recommendations.

A marine plan is adopted when the authority has decided to publish the Plan. A marine plan may only be adopted with the agreement of the SoS if it contains retained functions. The marine plan which the marine plan authority decides to publish may be the same as the proposals published in the consultation draft or those proposals with such modifications as the marine plan authority thinks fit. A marine plan authority which adopts a marine plan must publish it as soon as reasonably practicable after its adoption, together with statements on:

- any modifications that have been made to the proposals published in the consultation draft;
- the reasons for those modifications; and
- if any recommendations made by an independent investigator have not been implemented and the reasons why they have not been implemented.

Appendix 2 – UK Marine Policy Statement (2011)

Sections 44–48 of the MCAA make provision for the preparation and adoption of a MPS as a basis for establishing general policies contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK marine area.

The MPS was published in 2011 and is the framework for preparing Marine Plans and taking decisions affecting the marine environment in the UK marine area. It has been jointly developed and adopted by the Defra Secretary of State; Scottish Ministers; Welsh Ministers and the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland. The MPS is a key step towards achieving the vision shared by the UK administrations of having 'clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas', as set out in the 'Safeguarding our Seas' report (2002) and 'Our Seas – a shared resource: High Level Marine Objectives' (2009).

The MPS has been adopted by the UK administrations to facilitate and support the formulation of Marine Plans, ensuring that marine resources are used in a sustainable way, to:

- Promote sustainable economic development;
- Enable the UK's move towards a low-carbon economy, in order to mitigate the causes of climate change and ocean acidification and adapt to their effects;
- Ensure a sustainable marine environment which promotes healthy, functioning marine ecosystems and protects marine habitats, species and our heritage assets; and
- Contribute to the societal benefits of the marine area, including the sustainable use of marine resources to address local social and economic issues.

The MCAA provides the primary legislation for Marine Planning and the MPS provides the high-level policy context within which national and sub-national Marine Plans will be developed, implemented, monitored, amended and will ensure consistency in marine planning across the UK marine area.

The MPS and Marine Plans form a new plan-led system for marine activities, providing greater coherence in policy and a forward-looking, proactive and spatial planning approach to the management of the marine area, its resources, and the activities and interactions that take place within it. The MPS also sets the direction for marine licensing and other relevant authorisation systems. The MPS states that the process of marine planning will:

- Achieve integration between different objectives;
- Recognise that the demand for use of our seas and the resulting pressures on them will continue to increase;
- Manage competing demands on the marine area, taking an ecosystem-based approach;
- Enable co-existence of compatible activities wherever possible; and
- Integrate with terrestrial planning.

The MPS states that the process of marine planning will contribute to the achievement and integration of sectoral/activity policy objectives within a framework of economic, social and environmental considerations in order to deliver the HLMOs to help ensure the sustainable development of the UK marine area and deliver the UK vision. These HLMOs were published in 2009:

Achieving a sustainable marine economy

- Infrastructure is in place to support and promote safe, profitable and efficient marine businesses;
- The marine environment and its resources are used to maximise sustainable activity, prosperity and opportunities for all, now and in the future;
- Marine businesses are taking long-term strategic decisions and managing risks effectively. They are competitive and operating efficiently;
- Marine businesses are acting in a way which respects environmental limits and is socially responsible. This is rewarded in the marketplace.

Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society

- People appreciate the diversity of the marine environment, its seascapes, its natural and cultural heritage and its resources and act responsibly;
- The use of the marine environment is benefitting society as a whole, contributing to resilient and cohesive communities that can adapt to coastal erosion and flood risk, as well as contributing to physical and mental wellbeing;
- The coast, seas, oceans and their resources are safe to use;
- The marine environment plays an important role in mitigating climate change;
- There is equitable access for those who want to use and enjoy the coast, seas and their wide range of resources and assets and recognition that for some island and peripheral communities the sea plays a significant role in their community;
- Use of the marine environment will recognise, and integrate with, defence priorities, including the strengthening of international peace and stability and the defence of the UK and its interests.

Living within environmental limits

- Biodiversity is protected, conserved and where appropriate recovered and loss has been halted;
- Healthy marine and coastal habitats occur across their natural range and are able to support strong, biodiverse biological communities and the functioning of healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystems;
- Our oceans support viable populations of representative, rare, vulnerable, and valued species.

Promoting good governance

- All those who have a stake in the marine environment have an input into associated decision-making;
- Marine, land and water management mechanisms are responsive and work effectively together, for example through integrated coastal zone management and river basin management plans;
- Marine management in the UK takes account of different management systems that are in place because of administrative, political or international boundaries;
- Marine businesses are subject to clear, timely, proportionate and, where appropriate, plan-led regulation;
- The use of the marine environment is spatially planned where appropriate and based on an ecosystems approach which takes account of climate change and recognises the protection and management needs of marine cultural heritage according to its significance.

Using sound science responsibly

- Our understanding of the marine environment continues to develop through new scientific and socio-economic research and data collection;
- Sound evidence and monitoring underpins effective marine management and policy development;
- The precautionary principle is applied consistently in accordance with the UK Government and Devolved Administrations' sustainable development policy.

The MPS states that Marine Plans will provide a clear, spatial and locally-relevant expression of policy, implementation and delivery. That will ensure that different and potentially competing activities are managed in such a way that they contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. A key principle will be to promote compatibility and reduce conflict.

Appendix 3 – Ecosystem Approach

The MPS sets the requirement for Marine Plans to take an ecosytem approach, stating: *"A practical interpretation of the ecosystem approach is set out in regulation 5 of the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 which transpose the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. An ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities means an approach which ensures that the collective pressure of human activities is kept within levels compatible with the achievement of good environmental status; that does not compromise the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to human-induced changes; and that enables the sustainable use of marine goods and services."*

Other definitions of the ecosystem approach include:

- The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992): *"The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Application of the ecosystem approach will help to reach a balance of the three objectives of the Convention*[66]*. It is based on the application of appropriate scientific methodologies focused on levels of biological organisation which encompass the essential processes, functions and interactions among organisms and their environment. It recognises that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of ecosystems."* See: **www.cbd.int/ecosystem/**
- The Oslo & Paris Convention (OSPAR) (1992) & Helsinki Convention (HELCOM) (1992) define the ecosystem approach as: *"the comprehensive integrated management of human activities based on the best available scientific knowledge about the ecosystem and its dynamics, in order to identify and take action on influences which are critical to the health of marine ecosystems, thereby achieving sustainable use of ecosystem goods and services and maintenance of ecosystem integrity."* See the Statement towards an Ecosystem Approach to the Management of Human Activities adopted by the Joint Ministerial Meeting of the HELCOM and OSPAR Commissions held in 2003 in Bremen (Germany).[67]

The Environment (Wales) Act and the WFGA together create modern legislation for managing Wales' natural resources and improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. They help us tackle the challenges we face and to take better advantage of the potential opportunities for Wales. The Environment (Wales) Act focuses on building resilience into our ecosystems and recognising the benefits that they provide if we manage them in a smarter way.

SD is defined in the WFGA as *"the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals."*

Sustainable management of natural resources is defined in the Environment (Wales) Act as: *"using natural resources in a way and at a rate that maintains and enhances the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide. In doing so, meeting the needs of present generations of people without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and contributing to the achievement of the well-being goals in the WFGA."*

66 The conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by appropriate funding.

67 **www.ospar.org/site/assets/files/1232/jmm_annex05_ecosystem_approach_statement.pdf**.

Image supplied by: Skomer MCZ Team

As such, the SMNR framework refines delivery of the ecosystem approach in Wales into a set of principles (Table 4) which:

- Requires us to think about the complex relationships between nature and people over the long term;
- Helps us to think about the benefits that we get from natural resources now and in the future, recognising the ways they support our well-being;
- Encourages us to think about ways of making our ecosystems more resilient;
- Requires us to involve people in tackling these challenges from the start to identify the connections and opportunities to manage things better.

Table 4: Principles of sustainable management of natural resources

Adaptive management	Manage adaptively by planning, monitoring, reviewing and where appropriate, changing action.
Scale	Consider the appropriate spatial scale for action.
Collaboration and engagement	Promote and engage in collaboration and cooperation.
Public participation	Make appropriate arrangements for public participation in decision-making.
Evidence	Take account of all relevant evidence, and gather evidence in respect of uncertainties.
Multiple benefits	Take account of the benefits and intrinsic value of natural resources and ecosystems.
Long term	Take account of the short, medium and long-term consequences of actions.
Preventative action	Take action to prevent significant damage to ecosystems.
Building resilience	Take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following aspects: • diversity between and within ecosystems; • the connections between and within ecosystems; • the scale of ecosystems; • the condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning); • the adaptability of ecosystems.

Through sustainable management, and the associated principles, the Environment (Wales) Act puts the ecosystem approach on a statutory footing, drawing on international best practice and the 12 principles endorsed by the UN Convention of Biological Diversity, one of which is to ensure the integrity of ecosystems. The Environment (Wales) Act deals with the integrity of ecosystems by focussing on ecosystem resilience, which is about taking a positive and proactive approach and building resilience within all of our ecosystems to ensure they do not go beyond their inherent limits.

The Act introduces an iterative and interconnected framework for SMNR through the publication and review of the following documents which cover both land and the inshore marine planning region:

- The SoNaRR produced by NRW sets out the state of natural resources in relation to Wales, and the extent to which SMNR is being achieved;
- The Natural Resources Policy (NRP) produced by the Welsh Ministers sets out their general and specific policies including the key priorities, risks and opportunities for SMNR;
- Area statements produced by NRW help identify how the implementation of the national policy and the related policies in this Plan can be achieved at the local level;
- The SMNR framework complements the marine planning process, ensuring that the management of natural resources in terrestrial and marine environments is fully integrated and joined up.

The Act also places a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystem Duty on public authorities who exercise functions in Wales thereby putting biodiversity at the heart of decision making.

Appendix 4 – Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)

The following table illustrates how this Plan has been developed in accordance with, and gives effect to, the principles of ICZM. However, marine planning is not the only mechanism to deliver ICZM. Other plans and programmes in the coastal zone (e.g. RBMPs, SMPs, Area Statements etc.) contain policies and evidence that relate to ICZM. Nevertheless, marine planning can support integration by providing a mechanism through which to strengthen co-ordination and liaison through partnership working.

Table 5: ICZM principles applied through the marine planning process.

Marine planning process	ICZM principles applied	Context
Plan area selection decision	2, 4	In planning for the Wales marine area as a whole, the WNMP adopts a broad, holistic perspective as well as implementing an ecosystem approach. Marine plan boundaries overlap with terrestrial planning boundaries.
SPP and stakeholder engagement	5, 6, 8	Gives explicit means of stakeholder involvement in the Planning process and for engaging with key audiences. Stakeholder engagement is being implemented throughout the Planning process. ICZM requires active participation by local communities; local workshops facilitate this engagement.
Identifying issues	1, 6, 8	This involves gathering evidence from a range of stakeholders to identify issues within marine planning. Evidence and data gathered through the requirements of the SSE and WMER has informed planning and been made widely available. Local knowledge may be helpful in identifying additional evidence needs.
Gathering evidence	2, 5, 6, 8	Evidence gathering takes into account the interdependence and disparity of natural systems and human activities with an impact on coastal areas and involves relevant parties. Evidence gathering reflect local characteristics.
Vision and objectives	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8	Marine planning supports our commitment to manage coastal and marine activities in a sustainable manner taking into account economic, social, cultural and environmental considerations. The Plan is defined by clear objectives, which are based on long-term perspectives and ultimately stem from political priorities. The vision and objectives frame the Plan policies which will guide decision making.

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Marine planning process	ICZM principles applied	Context
Vision and objectives	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8	Marine planning supports our commitment to manage coastal and marine activities in a sustainable manner taking into account economic, social, cultural and environmental considerations. The Plan is defined by clear objectives, which are based on long-term perspectives and ultimately stem from political priorities. The vision and objectives frame the Plan policies which will guide decision making.
Options development	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8	Plan options have been developed in conjunction with stakeholders and with consideration for all available information using an integrated approach. The SA has helped to inform the development of Plan policy options.
Plan policy development	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Policies are developed to support the delivery of marine plan objectives. In developing the policies, account is taken of existing legislation and obligations, as well as the need for policy integration and integrated planning and decision-making. Where competing activities or developments seek to use the same area, consideration will include how each proposal contributes to the Plan vision and objectives and policies. There are different strength policies that address different sectors or issues where appropriate, but integration will also occur at the point of decision-making. This will require assessment of any accompanying information and any environmental, economic, cultural or social benefits and adverse effects. It is expected that over time greater detail will be incorporated within the policies as appropriate, as the evidence base grows.
Opportunity to comment on draft plans	5, 6	Public consultation on draft plans can be facilitated through the SPP in order to gather evidence and opinion from stakeholders. Draft plans will be accompanied by the SA report. The SA will consider social, cultural and economic issues as well as the potential environmental impacts. This ensures coverage of a wide range of sustainability issues.
Review plan proposals	5, 6	Plan proposals will be reviewed with consideration for the responses gathered from the representation of the draft plans through the SPP. Earlier drafts were refined following stakeholder advice and input.

Marine planning process	ICZM principles applied	Context
Independent investigation	5, 6	Appropriate stakeholder engagement throughout the development process through the SPP and public consultation can help avoid the need for an independent investigation.
Plan adopted and published	6	The Plan may be amended in light of the results of an independent investigation. The MCAA requires the marine plan authority to publish a statement setting out any modifications or changes made to the marine plan as published for consultation, setting out the reasons for these changes. The modifications report summarises the consultation comments received and changes made.
Implement, monitor and review	3, 6	Welsh Ministers as the marine plan authority have a responsibility to monitor the marine plans and their effectiveness and report on and review the plans every three years. Monitoring is vital for testing the effectiveness of Plan policies and informing decisions on requirements for changes to Plan policies (adaptive management). Planners and stakeholders must be involved in the monitoring and review process in order to improve future plans.

The ICZM principles applied and referred to in the table above are set out in Table 6.

Table 6: ICZM principles applied in table 5.

Principle 1	A broad overall perspective (thematic and geographic) which will take into account the interdependence and disparity of natural systems and human activities with an impact on coastal areas.
Principle 2	A long-term perspective which will take into account the precautionary principle and the needs of present and future generations.
Principle 3	Adaptive management during a gradual process which will facilitate adjustment as problems and knowledge develop. This implies the need for a sound scientific basis concerning the evolution of the coastal zone.
Principle 4	Local specificity and the great diversity of European coastal zones, which will make it possible to respond to their practical needs with specific solutions and flexible measures.
Principle 5	Working with natural processes and respecting the carrying capacity of ecosystems, which will make human activities more environmentally friendly, socially responsible and economically sound.
Principle 6	Involving all the parties concerned (economic and social partners, the organisations representing coastal zone residents, non-governmental organisations and the business sector) in the management process, for example by means of agreements and based on shared responsibility.
Principle 7	Support and involvement of relevant administrative bodies at national, regional and local level between which appropriate links should be established or maintained with the aim of improved coordination of the various existing policies. Partnership with and between regional and local authorities should apply when appropriate.
Principle 8	Use of a combination of instruments designed to facilitate coherence between sectoral policy objectives and coherence between planning and management.

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Glossary

AONB – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

CCS – Carbon Capture and Storage

DNS – Developments of National Significance

EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment

EMS – European Marine Site (collective term for Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar sites)

EPS – European Protected Species

FTE – Full-time Equivalent

GeS – Good Ecological Status

GES – Good Environmental Status

GVA – Gross Value Added

HELCOM – Helsinki Convention 1992

HLMO – High Level Marine Objective

ICZM – Integrated Coastal Zone Management

IG – Implementation Guidance

iMADP – Interim Marine Aggregates Dredging Policy (Wales 2004)

IMO – International Maritime Organisation

INNS – Invasive Non-Native Species

IROPI – Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest

IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature

LDP – Local Development Plan

London Convention & Protocol – International Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972 (and its 1996 Protocol)

MANP – The United Kingdom Multiannual National Plan for the Development of Sustainable Aquaculture

MARPOL – International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973

MCAA – Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

MCZ – Marine Conservation Zone

MER – Maximising Economic Recovery

MOD – Ministry of Defence

MPN – Marine Planning Notice

MPAs – Marine Protected Areas

MPS – UK Marine Policy Statement 2011

MSY – Maximum Sustainable Yield (in fisheries management this is the maximum level at which a fish stock can be routinely exploited without long-term depletion)

MW – Megawatt

NDF – National Development Framework (Wales)

NPS – National Policy Statement (UK)

NRP – Natural Resources Policy (Wales)

NRW – Natural Resources Wales

NSIP – Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (UK)

OESEA – Offshore Energy Strategic Environment Assessment

OGA – Oil and Gas Authority

OPRED – Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning

OSPAR – Oslo & Paris International Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic 1992

PPW – Planning Policy Wales

RA – Resource Area

Ramsar – International Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat 1971

RBMPs – River Basin Management Plans

R&D – Research and Development

RIGS – Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Site

Ro-Ro – Roll-on Roll-off ships and vessels

RTS – Regional Aggregates Working Parties' Regional Technical Statement

SA – Sustainability Appraisal

SAC – Special Area of Conservation

SD – Sustainable Development

SDP – Strategic Development Plan (Wales)

SMNR – Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

SMP – Shoreline Management Plan

SO – Several Order

SoNaRR – State of Natural Resources Report

SPA – Special Protection Area

SPP – Statement of Public Participation

SRA – Strategic Resource Area

SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest

SSE – Strategic Scoping Exercise

SWW – Surface Water and Wastewater Treatment and Disposal

TAN – Technical Advice Note (Wales)

TCE – The Crown Estate

TSS – Traffic Separation Scheme

UAS – Unmanned Air Systems

USUV – Unmanned Surface and Underwater Vehicles

UKMMAS – UK Marine Monitoring and Assessment Strategy

WFGA – Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

WG – Welsh Government, who are the Marine Plan Authority in Wales

WMER – Wales Marine Evidence Report

WNMP – Welsh National Marine Plan